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NICHOLAS I.

EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

Published by Henry Colburn, Great Marlborough Street, 1839.

EXCURSIONS

IN THE INTERIOR OF

RUSSIA;

B 2606

INCLUDING

SKETCHES OF THE CHARACTER AND POLICY

OF THE

EMPEROR NICHOLAS,

SCENES IN ST. PETERSBURG,

&c. &c.

83394

BY ROBERT BREMNER, ESQ.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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VOL. I.

LONDON:
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WHITING, BEAUFORT HOUSE, STRAND.

PREFACE.

THESE volumes chiefly consist of the narrative of a short visit to Russia, during the autumn of 1836, in the course of a general tour through Europe.

Much of what they contain, however, is the fruit of the author's occasional intercourse with Russians in other parts of the continent. Having (on two different occasions) spent in all upwards of five years abroad, he has had it in his power to become acquainted with the manners and sentiments of Russians, under circumstances which enabled them to throw off the mask which, in their own country, few of them can dare to dispense with. To all who know what Russia really is, it is unnecessary to say that it is not *in Russia* that the true state of opinion among the higher classes of that country can be best learned.

To his long residence abroad, during which he paid considerable attention to the various political questions connected with Russia, the author is also indebted for many of the facts given in support of the remarks which he hazards on the policy and character of the present emperor.

Fully aware, however, that neither his visit to Russia, nor his opportunities of becoming acquainted with the opinions of Russians in other countries, can qualify him for doing justice to such an ample theme as that comprised in the present work, he begs of those who may cast their eye on the following pages, that they will regard their contents rather as scraps by the way, than as the complete and well-matured production of the study. In fact the title,—"Excursions" and "Sketches,"—will at once warn the reader that he is here to find only snatches caught by the passing eye, not the full landscape itself—the mere gleanings of a vast and fertile field, not the rich harvest which abler hands would have reaped.

It is also necessary to state that the work was begun on a foreign shore, under circumstances which rendered it impossible to obtain access to books of any value, and has been completed in a beautiful but remote part of Scotland, where it was equally impossible to obtain the aid of any extensive library. It has been entirely written, therefore, from hurried notes kept while travelling, and does not even contain that array of learned names which might have atoned for the want of learning in the author himself.

In fact, conscious as he is of its many defects, he would not have presumed to lay his work

before the public, had he not felt that at a moment like the present, when the most overwhelming interest exists in regard to Russia, it is the duty of every one, who has made that country his study, and endeavoured to obtain correct information concerning it, to give to the world whatever may be calculated to throw light on its actual condition, its prospects, or its resources. This duty is doubly incumbent on those who are anxious, as the author is, to counteract the tendency of some works which have recently appeared on the same subject. The presses of the continent now teem with publications containing the most fulsome praises of Russia, and giving the most overcharged statements of her power and resources; and unfortunately, the presses of England are not altogether ignorant of books written in the same spirit. Were we to take these for our guides, the government of Russia would appear to be the most liberal of all governments, and the people of Russia the happiest of all people. Her strength is held up to us as boundless, irresistible,—as the most formidable, and best consolidated, that ever threatened the liberties and the rights of man. In short, the praises of Russia, which now ring on every side, are of the most exaggerated description.

It would not, perhaps, be difficult to discover the source from which many of these representations proceed; or, at least, to account for the tone

which they assume. Suffice it, however, to say, that truth will never be written on Russia, except by those who repair to it untrammelled by connexion with the government, and who leave it unbought by the favours of the emperor.

That the author was in this impartial position, will at once be evident, when he states that he and the friend included in the "we" which is employed throughout the following pages, visited Russia as private individuals, with no object in view but to make themselves acquainted with the manners, condition, and prospects of the people; in short, to obtain as much information as could be acquired during so short a visit, about a country which is daily becoming more and more interesting to the other nations of Europe. They had neither government protection, nor a single tie of interest to bias their views. But though they had no higher patronage than that which good introductions procured for them, they enjoyed many opportunities for acquiring information, and can honestly say, that they endeavoured to turn them to the best account, by associating with those, who from their talents and position, were best qualified to give them useful and accurate intelligence; by mingling freely in the various scenes of interest with which both the capital and the interior abound; by leaving no sight unvisited that was likely to yield instruction; and by sparing no pains in their endea-

vour to arrive at the truth on all important subjects connected with the country or its prospects.

These excursions, therefore, should they possess no other value, may at least serve as specimens of what travellers, anxious to make the best use of their time, may see and learn during even a brief stay in a strange land; and the author has been encouraged in his undertaking, by the conviction which he entertains that many defects will be pardoned in a writer who is anxious to correct misrepresentation, to remove prejudice, to IMPART TRUTH; and especially when he treats of subjects which, it will be universally allowed, are of vital moment to England at the present crisis.

So little has of late been written on the *interior* of Russia, that the author trusts the portions of his work which relate to it, will possess considerable interest for all who may be anxious to become acquainted with the actual state of that vast region. The agriculture and manufactures of the principal districts—the condition of the serfs —and, especially, the internal resources of the empire, are subjects which at this moment possess the very highest interest for the statesman and the publicist; and all of these, accordingly, have been touched upon at considerable length. Passing pictures of scenery and manners, and notices of such other subjects as are likely to interest the

general reader, have also been introduced; and they may be more acceptable to the public, from the fact that, while so much has recently been published on the manners and scenery of the more frequented portions of Europe, comparatively little of the same description has appeared on Russia. This is, doubtless, attributable to the circumstance that few of our travellers visit that country; for, even in the present day, when the passion for travel has become so universal, and thousands of miles are thought as little of as hundreds were some years ago, the number of Englishmen who venture to the south of Moscow, seldom exceeds one or two every year.

This paucity of foreign visiters to Russia may be partly owing to the want of information regarding the method of travelling in that country. For, strange to say, while there are hundreds of guide-books to every other country, there is not a single work that gives any really available advice to the traveller intending to visit the dominions of the autocrat. In order to supply this want, and in answer to the many applications which friends have made to him for advice about travelling in Russia, the author here publishes all that his notes contain on this subject. Judging by the difficulty which he himself had in procuring information of this kind when about to visit Russia, he trusts that, while not

devoid of interest to the general reader, the notices he has given on the best way of proceeding to St. Petersburg— the customs and police formalities on entering and leaving it; the more common words of the language; hotels and posting; and particularly on the best method of accomplishing a journey in the interior, will be *of the greatest use to those who intend to travel in Russia. A full enumeration of all the topics of this nature, with references to the pages where they occur, is given under the head of* HINTS TO TRAVELLERS, *at the end of the Table of Contents to the present volume.*

That some of the questions discussed in these pages are handled with a freedom which may be far from agreeable to the admirers of Russia, is what the author is fully prepared to hear. But he is persuaded that the enlightened sovereign who now sways the destinies of that mighty empire, would rather hear the strictures of an impartial censor, than the praises of an uncompromising eulogist. The commendations here bestowed on some of his measures will be less liable to suspicion, when they come from one who has felt himself constrained to speak in very different terms of other parts of his policy.

Throughout the narrative, the author has en-

deavoured to avoid thrusting himself unnecessarily forward on the reader's attention. His object has been *to give information about the people and the country*, not to write a brilliant romance, of which he himself should be the hero. Deeming all details of a merely personal nature, to be nothing but impertinencies in a book of travels, he has seldom alluded to affairs which, however interesting to himself, can possess no interest for the public. Facts in themselves trifling, are indeed occasionally mentioned, but it is only when they tend to throw light on the manners or customs of the country.

After what has been already mentioned, it is unnecessary to add that it is neither with a view to give additional importance to the statements, nor to ward off responsibility for them, that the pompous "we" has been made use of in these volumes. In fact, the original party of *two* was latterly increased to *four* individuals; but the author does not feel himself entitled to publish the names of those in whose society he performed his happy and improving rambles through Russia, as *he alone* is accountable for all the statements and opinions advanced in the work which he now respectfully recommends to the indulgence of the public.

London, January 25, 1839.

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Frontispiece to the First Volume.

THE EMPRÉSS ALEXANDRA-FŒODOROVNA.
Frontispiece to the Second Volume.

ST. PETERSBURG.

THE EMPEROR.

EXCURSIONS,

&c.

CHAPTER I.

SUMMER HOURS IN THE BALTIC.

Our sailing from Stockholm—Reasons for avoiding the route through Finland—The *Johanna Sophia*—Scanty berth on board—Sketch of a Swedish captain and his crew—Dropping down Channel—Contrast with the Thames—*Wexholm*—Romantic scenery—*Sandham*—Gulf of Bothnia—Islands of Aland—Their importance to Russia—Sunrise—"Land!"—*Dago Island*—*Revel*—*Sveaborg*.

"To morr', punkt at tolf, jimmlemen, we schiff from Stockholm."

Such were the mystic words in which captain, or more correctly, skipper Eric Simonsson of Malmo, acquainted us with the hour at which his tidy bark the *Johanna Sophia* was to sail for St. Petersburg; the good man wisely employing, as the safest means of communicating with foreigners, the amusing lingua-franca of the North—a capricious mixture of English, German, and Swedish, so accommodating that it varies with each speaker, according to the language in which he is, for the moment, most ambitious of being thought a proficient.

That he spoke a language, if language it could be called, out of which, with a little ingenuity, we could always draw *some* meaning, was, of course, no slight recommendation of his ship. Besides his attainments in English, however, the captain possessed another great virtue in our eyes—he was overjoyed at the prospect of carrying us with him. Having never in all his voyages, to many parts of the world, had charge of even *one* Englishman, the thought of actually having *two* of them at once was so delightful to him, that, we verily believe, he would have taken us for nothing, rather than have renounced a distinction he had so long sighed for.

We had little difficulty therefore in coming to an agreement. Arrangements were soon made for our reception; and, knowing that we had to deal with a right peremptory and word-keeping Swede, we did not fail to be on board, the following day, most punctually at twelve.

But, alas! winds and waves provokingly kept true to their wonted fickleness. The captain was ready —we were ready—all the world was ready; yet noon was long past, and we moved not from the spot.

The bright sun of July shone so benignantly on the deep clear waters of the Mälar—the vapory clouds hung so gracefully over the most beautiful of all the beautiful cities of the north—the lovely flowers crept so gently against the gleaming windows of the palace, beneath which lay our vessel—silence —the silence of noonday, more startling in a great

city than that of night—rested so breathlessly on rock, and tower, and tree—in short, both on the water and, on land, all was

"So peaceful and so fair,"

that the breeze refused to lift his discordant voice. A goodly convoy was that day to leave the crowded harbour; but their canvas hung idly by the mast. The hundred ships around, floated as if bound by a wintry spell; the sleeping sea-birds that basked in the tide were not more motionless.

Man himself was affected by the stillness and beauty of the summer day. The heavy wheels of commerce, as during the siesta in a southern clime, had ceased to roll. The sailor's shout, and the boatmaid's song, were hushed. The oars of the few boats still passing from side to side, glided as noiselessly as if the element they dipped into had been turned into oil.

Wishing, however, to be ready for any change, we remained patiently on board, hoping that, as day declined, some stray gale might steal from the lakes of the interior, and waft us on to the sea. In fact, having regretfully said our adieus,—and who ever left Stockholm and its warmhearted people without regret?—we were unwilling to land there again, lest, after all, we might be tempted to give up our project of visiting the dominions of the Tzar.

We knew before embarking that the voyage to St.

Petersburg would occupy at least eight days, and perhaps as many as eighteen. But even with the chance of delay, we thought it advisable to avoid the more circuitous course now usually adopted—by the steamboat to Abo, and thence by land along the northern shore of the Gulf of Finland. We had no desire to face the annoyances complained of by all who enter Russia at that point. There being no public conveyance from the landing port, we should have been compelled to take any carriage and any servant that happened to be idle, at the risk of being robbed by the one, or having our necks broke by the other.

The greatest objection to this route, however, lies in the severities of the Russian custom-house, which, troublesome every where, are on the Finland line so particularly annoying, that some friends who traversed it the preceding year, say, they would go five hundred miles about rather than be again exposed to them. Carriage, trunks, pocket-books, and pockets are searched, not once merely on landing, but over and over again at certain stations along the road. One had his box of tooth-powder carefully emptied to see what treason or what contraband might lurk in its dusky shelter. Another had his soap-balls cut in two, with the same purpose; he next saw his stockings slowly unfolded, pair after pair, and was not sure that some of them did not vanish in the process; for the searchers have a trick of coming three or four together, and, distracting their victim's attention by

opening several packages at the same time, quietly secrete any article that pleases them; yet, after all, ask a fee for having given so little trouble.

It should be a rule with the traveller in every country, not to allow more than *one* of his trunks to be open at the same moment in such places. But with the light-fingered Russians, even this precaution will not always save his property. An American gentleman, lately passing this very road, with his wife, while he had his feet on one portmanteau, and was sitting on the other to keep them from being all opened at once, had the satisfaction of seeing a costly shawl walk off before his eyes. The best of it was, the theft was denied; the search which he attempted in the adjoining cottage among the goods and chattels of the officer's wife, to whom he supposed it had been handed, was, of course, fruitless. For the sake of future travellers, he afterwards complained to the finance minister, who received him very courteously, and, perhaps, ordered one or two of the parties to be knouted,—then appointed others in their place, to play the same game on the very first opportunity. These are evils in Russia which, although civilization may banish them, neither the knout nor the emperor have yet been able to root out.

In short, the complaints about this Abo route are so great, that, though the country is very pretty, and the roads good, there are few who know its character that would not prefer almost any conveyance by sea all the way to St. Petersburg.

We, at least, had no reason to regret our choice; an admission at which some may marvel when we state, that the accommodations of the *Johanna Sophia* were not of the most elegant description. The cabin—a sort of overgrown sentry-box fastened to the deck—was something like the poet's closet—

> —— "just six feet by four;
> So nobly large, 'twas scarcely able
> To admit a single chair and table."

A temporary bed-frame occupied the doorway on one side, while another displayed a brown box, serving as a second bed by night and as a bench by day.

Sailors, however, are such good hands at making the most of little space, that this cage further contained a folding-board to write and dine upon, a cabinet for our books and maps, and a larder for indispensables. In fine, nothing was wanting to any one in good health and willing to be pleased.

The crew, as we found on further acquaintance, was very steady; and our squat friend, the captain, one of the worthiest souls that ever chewed tobacco. In his trips to London and Leith, he had picked up about as much of English as he had acquired of German in his visits to Stettin, and from both united, had concocted a most amusing jargon peculiar to himself.

Having a high regard for England, and every thing connected with it, he showed us great attention from the first; and when we got better acquainted, his anxiety to make us comfortable was most affectionate.

Travelling he held in the greatest horror. On hearing that we had been full twelve months from home, and might still be absent as many more, he held up his hands in wonder, and fairly confessed that he could not imagine what tempted people to go among strangers, merely to be pestered with difficulties. In a ship, to be sure, a person might visit foreign countries without losing all claim to be regarded as a man of sense; *there* the wanderer was in a manner at home all the time; but on land! he would make ten trips through the Bay of Biscay sooner than trust himself ten hours on shore. His tirades were generally wound up with an emphatic: "They're terrible fellows, thim furraners!"

These warnings, partly intended for the benefit of a Swedish mechanic on board, going to seek his fortune in Russia, were given out of pure love. He seemed to look upon us somewhat in the light of children that had run away from home, without calculating the danger of an unfriendly world. If at any time we appeared to tire of a ship-life, or if the vapours threatened us, which was but seldom, or if the Russian grammar, which we were trying to study, was thrown aside in utter despair, there was no end to the devices he employed to cheer us. When his lessons in steering, boxing the compass, studying the charts, heaving the lead, fishing for turbot, or other grave pursuits, were all exhausted, he would put on his best gray coat, and sit down with us to ask questions about England, or spin a sailor's yarn, squirting

out waves of tobacco-juice at every second sentence. Should all these intellectual methods fail, he tried to rouse us with a beaker of his best coffee, or some savoury dish, cooked under his own eye. Indeed, the "cok" being by no means a first-rate professor, and, as he said, there being "no wummans on board to do things nice," he generally bore a hand himself in preparing our dinner, and brought it to table, with the joyous shout, "Dinner's a-cumbing, jimmlemen!"

We always knew by his dress when a squall was approaching. The moment the first angry cloud appeared, he mounted himself in a pair of enormous boots, which covered half his body, wrapped an ominous red comforter about his neck, donned a battered scraper, with a tail down the back as long as the swab, and took with double fury to the tobacco-pouch. He never lost his temper, however; the only theme that could at all ruffle it was that of steam-boats—a sore topic with most of his profession. His remarks on this subject were a beautiful specimen of the sort of reasoning brought against innovations of every kind. "Both stim-boats and railroads is werry dangerous," would he say in better English than usual. "I'm for nun on 'em myself. Only ten men employed where there were a hundred, and horrid nasty. Near a dozen of ships used to go several times every summer to Lubeck; now *one* stim-boat carries all the goods. *They* took six weeks, and *she* only ten days, out and home. It's quite a shame. My hands get fourteen dollars (1*l.* 4*s.*) a month, and the stim-

fellows don't give no more. They should all be burnt. I hope nun o' my men will ever try such nigger work."

In fact, the good Swede had a great regard for his crew; and it is much to the credit of their country that, neither from them nor him, did we hear an oath or an angry word all the time we were on board.

The regularity with which they performed their devotions was most exemplary; and the same sight may be witnessed on board of most Swedish ships. At a certain hour, before setting the night-watch, they assembled together in a small place on deck. When each had uncovered, a prayer was said by the captain, and then all united in singing a psalm; after which they separated, each going to his post with mutual blessings. Those quiet sunset-hours in the Baltic, hallowed by such a touching scene, will long be looked back to among the most pleasing remembrances of wanderings in which we have to thank God for much that is pleasing. Generally the first sound that greeted us again in the morning was the voice of prayer renewed. The manner too in which they honoured the sabbath—so often unheeded at sea—was most edifying; there was something pious even in their way of changing the watch in the night, the man at the helm chanting slowly, "Rise up to change the watch, in the name of God!" and if the crew happened to be asleep when the supper-hour came on, the summons always ran, "Turn out to eat, in the name of God."

In such good company did we leave Stockholm; the weather continuing so calm that it took us nearly two days to reach the sea, a distance of only seventy miles. Whatever breeze there was above, the high rocks which line the long channel the whole way from the sea to the Swedish capital, lulled its influence so completely, that, in spite of every effort, we lay the whole of the first day within hearing of the city murmur. While the boat was sent ahead with a few hands on the oars, for the lazy purpose of tugging us on at the rate of some yards in two or three hours, we had no solace but to look with envy on the happy people driving about in the park, or to hang over the ship's side as submissively as the unsuccessful sportsmen who had rowed from town to pass the afternoon in fishing for *strœmlings*, a small (and the only) kind of herring now found in the Baltic; in angling for which no bait is used, but merely a sharp hook, against which the fish is thrown by chance and is caught; to the great joy of the cockney angler, who sits as if boat and man were nailed together, jerking his elbows and nodding his head with the monotonous patience of a Chinese figure in a tea-shop.

Yet it was a pleasant dreamy life, as we lay gazing on the smooth waters, and the fantastic wooded heights mirrored back with new beauty from the crystal below. The varying city, of itself, long formed a magnificent picture, and its charm was heightened by the nearer objects—the graceful ships,

when the evening breeze at last came forth, with their sails all set, moving lazily up and down, and across—pleasure-boats—scenes of industry, with the busy hammer echoing back from the cliffs—and the falling calm of sunset beginning to rest upon all.

About 16 miles down we passed *Wexholm*, a kind of dilapidated fortress, on a small rock in the middle of the channel, where ships going and coming show their papers, and passengers their passports. On the north side, where the rocks recede a little, is a small town, with abundance of windmills and distilleries. The channels on either side of the rock are so narrow that a boom can be thrown across each. The place is of little strength, but is now undergoing repair. The handful of convicts at work were probably the only cause of newspaper rumours which had recently been travelling through Europe, announcing mighty preparations in the forts and strong places of Sweden.

Just below this point, the direct navigation is impeded by the remains of two men-of-war, which were sunk in 22 feet of water, so far back as 1801, to keep the English from passing.

It is now long since any English ships of war passed here; but to all appearance, the day is not far distant when we may find it wise to send them this way, unless we wish to see a steady ally become the victim of an insatiable ambition. Russia, with her usual foresight and cunning, under the mask of friendship and the interchange of courtesies, beneath

which she so well knows how to conceal the most inimical designs, is making herself well acquainted with the approach to Stockholm. A Russian brig of war was lying in the very heart of the city during our stay there; and on our way down we met one of the emperor's steamers hastening up with young officers on board, sent thither with the view of making them practically acquainted with the high-way which they hope soon to traverse in a different character.

Soon after passing the little fortress, the river becomes extremely beautiful, the widening channel being varied with verdant inlets and fine bays, at the bottom of one of which, to the south, rises the palace of Fredericksberg—a large structure among gentle eminences fringed with trees. In truth, few rivers are more romantic than the noble approach to the Swedish capital. At certain spots the channel is so narrow that we could touch the foliage drooping from the rocks overhead. From the loftiness and variety of its shores, this channel is, in point of scenery, far superior to the sail from Margate to London. But what a contrast its silence and loneliness present to the shouts and bustle of the Thames! After we had got away from the pleasure-boats of the citizens, which with even a moderate breeze could have been done in twenty minutes, the inlet was often as silent as the lakes of Norway. Ships of some kind or other, however, were generally in sight; now and then a girl would row up, in a little boat, with her milk-pails glittering about her, bound,

quite alone, on a twenty mile voyage to market; or a barge would appear, sunk to the edge by the towering castles of firewood built on its deck. Sometimes a fishing-boat would offer us her capture, or a provision lugger would creep up from Finland, which still supplies the Swedish capital with butter, cheese, poultry, salmon, beef,—in short, as the captain said, that fertile land exports "all kinds of *fat* things."

These objects, however, presented themselves only at distant intervals. At times not a single sail was in view; and we were often so completely becalmed, that we had an opportunity of rowing in the yawl to spots so tranquil and so beautiful, that, while we gazed on them in the silence of the summer night, it seemed as if Ariosto's magic,

"Giace in Arabia"—

might, with more than poetic justice, have been transferred to these hyperborean solitudes. At other times, in exploring some of the lonely islands, our fancies changed to scenes of another character; for so lonely and beautiful are these wood-crowned isles, so fresh and limpid their surrounding waters, that we dreamed ourselves away to the far Pacific, and began to fancy that the fir-trees were palms, and thought we should meet poor Friday, or, at least, discover the print of a man's foot in the sand—but in vain. These islands, as well as the greater part of the land on either side of the inlet, are almost entirely tenantless and uncultivated; so that the capital, with this long stretch of fruitless soil on one

side of it, is forced to draw most of its supplies from a distance: without Scania and Finland, it could not stand out a fortnight.

Pleasant as we had found this inlet, the navigation requires such caution, that we had a pilot on board all the way to *Sandham*, a small cluster of houses in the bay, which forms the entrance to the channel. It is surrounded by firs, which find but a scanty subsistence among the sand, and can scarcely be said to shelter the sad graves of those who had died of cholera in the quarantine. Here we got a new pilot to convey us out to sea, were overhauled by the custom-house, and left Sweden with a hearty breeze, which carried us gallantly past the mouth of the Gulf of Bothnia.

On the map the gulf looks very narrow; in fact, a short way farther north it is so contracted, that in March, 1809, a Russian army, under Barclay de Tolly, crossed on the ice in three days from Wasa to Umea in Sweden. But narrow as the mouth seems, it is beset by so many rugged provoking little islands, that vessels going to Abo often have a most tedious passage. Some English gentlemen, who hired a vessel for this voyage in the preceding October, were twelve days at sea, and in such danger, that they advise all who come after them, to seek another course. In winter the post and couriers cross from island to island on the ice; but even those who are most accustomed to this task, reckon it very dangerous work. The ice being

often full of flaws, and large holes occurring where least expected, they never travel without a light boat and a band of fishermen, who, on reaching solid ice, mount their pinnace on long skates, and drag it to the next opening. At one point the coasts of Sweden and Russia are scarcely sixty miles apart; and there being islands between, there is not, in fact, more than twenty-five miles of water.

The group of islands nearest the mouth of the gulf are known by the general name of the Aland isles. As many as eighty are said to be more or less inhabited by people, who chiefly subsist by catching fish and sea-birds. The largest island, from which the whole group is named, contains 14,000 inhabitants. Near it, in 1714, Peter the Great gained over the Swedes the victory which first made Russia known as a naval power. Since 1809 these islands have belonged to Russia, who finds them of great importance as a station for some of her ships in winter; the current from the gulf being so stormy, as to keep a few of the creeks free from ice, when the other Russian seas are completely frozen.

But it is time to take leave of the Baltic. Before doing so, however, we must mention a scene which will not soon be forgotten.

A sunrise at sea is one of the most impressive sights in nature. The hour of one had not long struck. As if expectant of some great advent, the

waves had softened their turbulence, and the wind was almost lulled. In the east the sky was gradually reddening; but behind us lay a gray uniform mass of vapours, whose gloom only heightened the golden blushes that were every moment spreading wider and wider in the opposite quarter of the heavens. Ere long, the burning edge—a single narrow line you would have said—just kissed the waters. Little by little it rose,—and we gazed almost breathless on the expanding glow,—till the broad round orb hung over the rejoicing waters, one strong undimmed circle of intensest red.

For a moment he paused, as if to survey the course he was to follow, then rolled on in triumph, to give beauty and strength to the nations.

Silence, deep and reverential, was the fittest hymn with which we could welcome the beneficent luminary; words at such a moment would have been out of place. The complete tranquillity, in the absence of all other objects to distract the attention, increased the effect of a sight which, under any circumstances, would have been most sublime. To this at least it is that we attribute the deep impression made by this sunrise. We have witnessed others, but none with feelings of delighted awe equal to those now experienced. Except the smooth steady rush of the vessel through the water, not a single sound was to be heard; while the only thing in sight was a solitary ship, in itself always a beautiful

object, and now heightening rather than diminishing the effect of the orb which had brought it into light on the distant horizon.

The *last* sunrise that we had witnessed was on the Harz Mountains; the next that we were to enjoy was on the Adriatic, within sight of Venice; both were beautiful; but neither of them made so strong an impression as this scene in the Baltic. In the one instance, the witches of the Brocken, in the guise of fair-haired German maidens, distracted our thoughts by their incantations; in the other, the trampling feet of the wonted motley crowd of an Italian steamer, banished all idea of solitude—for it was a December morning, and, even on the Adriatic, December calls for exercise to keep the blood in motion. At the same time a serious rival to the struggling sun was presented by the smoke and flames, in which the poor Fenice was bidding a last farewell to "the sea Cybele" it had so long helped to adorn.

True, we might contrast this northern sunrise with another—one beheld from the island of Capri, on the roof of Tiberius's palace—that giddy eminence where none can have stood, at such a moment, without trembling, not from fear, but from drunken joy; for lo! the sun is up, and far as the eye can reach, a thousand and a thousand glories are gleaming beneath the bright sky of the Campanian spring—

> ——————— "Not a grove,
> Citron, or pine, or cedar, not a grot,
> Sea-worn and mantled with the gadding vine,
> But breathes enchantment. Not a cliff but flings

On the clear wave some image of delight,
Some cabin-roof glowing with crimson flowers,
Some ruin'd temple or fallen monument."

What a contrast to the unsung, uninteresting shores along which we were now sailing!

The captain's shout of "Land! Russia!" soon after the sun had risen, most effectually dispelled all dreams of other lands. The first view of Russia resembled any thing but the coast to which our thoughts were wandering.

The second morning from Sandham had brought us in sight of the large and populous island of *Dago*, which looks the most perfect contrast to all that is beautiful.

We next crossed the mouth of the deep gulf which takes its name from RIGA, the capital of Livonia, and the second trading city of Russia. White sails raised on poles to warn ships off the reefs which they mark, and the many lighthouses, as on the island of *Norgen* and others, show that the navigation is very dangerous. It was not till next day that we got a sight of REVEL, the capital of Esthonia, with its pointed towers high and heavy in the distance. We were now in sight also of the opposite coast of Finland, formed of low heights, presenting a singular variance with the cliff-bound shores of Sweden and Norway. When night fell, we had often as many as three lighthouses within view at the same time.

The breeze which had been deserting us, now returned, and, carrying us on all night at the rate of seven knots an hour, took us, next morning, swiftly

past the high island of *Hogland*, with several other islands right and left. HELSINGFORS, the capital of Finland, and its neighbouring fortress SVEABORG, "the Gibraltar of the North," rose, but scarcely visible, on our left.

We now pass to a more exciting scene.

CHAPTER II.

CRUISE THROUGH THE RUSSIAN FLEET—THE EMPEROR AT SEA.

Surprise—First impression on meeting so many ships of war—Great strength of the Russian marine—The emperor on board—Anecdotes—The sea-sick courtier—Energy of the emperor—His general character—Beloved by the people—His anxiety to astonish them—Activity on land—Exposes himself at sea.

If disappointed of a sight of the sea-fortress of Finland, we were destined to behold another and more stirring exhibition of Russia's strength.

It was about noon (18th of July), when our attention was drawn to a large vessel bearing down with all sail set. She proved to be a ship-of-the-line, of the largest dimensions. Another soon appeared—another—and another,

"The cry was still 'They come!'"

till we could reckon near fifty men-of-war, all in view at the same moment.

A more splendid scene it had never been our fortune to witness. Such a number even of small vessels would have formed a beautiful sight; but the

effect produced by this vast array of large ships is beyond description.

When the first feelings of wonder had subsided, we rubbed our eyes, and began to ask where we could have got to? We were IN THE MIDST OF THE BALTIC FLEET; and if truth must be told, we did not, as Englishmen, feel at all gratified by the sight. We had *heard* much of the increasing strength of the Russian navy, but merely hearing of it produced a very feeble impression compared with that of actually *seeing* this modern armada, in life and motion around us.

The fleet was now out on its annual cruise; and we had come just at the luckiest moment, the ships being all in their highest trim, in expectation of the emperor. We gazed almost with childish wonder, long after we had thought that all must have passed, as frigate after frigate still continued to heave in sight.

The only way we had of measuring the space occupied by the different divisions was, by referring to the pins in our log-board, by which it appeared that, from noon, when we came upon the first of them, till past six in the evening, when we were still meeting ships, we had been going regularly five-and-a-half knots an hour; so that the whole line must have extended considerably above thirty miles. Nor was this all: a great many passed us in the night—at one time fourteen of them together; they were repeatedly

so thick, ships of all sizes, that our captain could scarcely make his way through them.

In short, we thought the gay pageant would stretch till our very hearts should break for vexation.

It is not, however, as *alarmists* that we write, but simply to *give information*—to communicate what we saw and heard of the Russian fleet, with the view of helping as far as we can, along with more able authorities, to enlighten the public regarding the real condition of the emperor's navy. For this purpose, some facts connected with this fleet, and the state of the Russian marine in general, will be given in another part of the volume under a distinct head. At present, it may suffice to state that, for a time our attention was completely absorbed by the exciting spectacle. Such a splendid sight we never expect to see again. The day was most beautiful; every ship had her sails set, and ploughed the waters with the grace of some stately bird that scarcely ruffles her native lake. The fine breeze kept all in motion. Signals for changing position were rapidly passing from one end of the line to the other: new groups, the most varied and most beautiful, were thus every moment presenting themselves.

A little more of storm—something of danger—black hurrying gloom in place of that sunny sky—and it would have been a scene for a Vernet. Night at last closed upon it, and drove us to rest—to rest,

but not to sleep. For the breeze had freshened and, the whole night long, there was nothing but shout and tumult, from the danger of being run foul of by some of the still increasing concourse.

At last, the emperor himself passed us in a fine steamer. He was on his way down to superintend the manœuvres which were to take place before a great proportion of the fleet should return to port for the season. The morning was rough, and, for a landsman, sufficiently disagreeable.

Many on board with his majesty were dreadfully ill. Among the anecdotes afterwards whispered about, was one of some member of the imperial party —a minister or other high functionary—on whom the sea-sickness had such an extraordinary effect, that for a time he was literally mad! In madness, as in another state of forgetfulness, truth will some times come out. Amid his ravings, he upbraided his imperial master in the most unmeasured terms—heaped all kinds of abuse upon him, and brought all kinds of charges against him. In short, the royal cabin was a scene of confusion and dismay; every body was confounded; such uncourtly indiscretion even in a court madman, had never before been heard of. Nicholas himself—the Russians never speak of him as the Emperor, but always by his christian name, with the Russian addition of his father's—Nicholas Paulovitch himself was probably the least moved of all; but the story goes that—

whether as part of his fit, or from terror on discovering his rashness, we know not—the poor offender at last threatened to kill himself, and could only be kept by violence from accomplishing his purpose.

But, let winds, or courtiers who were never at the mercy of the winds before, rave as they might, the emperor was not to be kept at home. For, in order to introduce the reader to some knowledge of his character, and as a key to the remarks which will be made in succeeding chapters, it may be stated at this early stage of our excursions that, *on land,* it is part of his policy to surprise the people by encountering difficulties of every kind; flying here and flying there, in the face of danger; accomplishing journeys and doing all kinds of things that nobody else would do. The peasant holds up his hands at the narrative—"*Eto stranno,* It is strange! Nicholas is a wonder!"

And Nicholas knows well what he is about. By his activity and energy he has brought the people to look upon him as a god. His very name strikes them with awe—not with terror; for let the admission from an Englishman be viewed in England with what prejudice it may, here, on the very threshold of his dominions, we think it but candid to declare, as the result of our intercourse with Russians, that the feelings with which he is regarded, we do not say by all, but by the many, are those of warm affection. In plain terms, THE EMPEROR IS MOST ENTHUSIAS-

TICALLY BELOVED BY THE GREAT MASS OF THE PEOPLE. From the freedom of the strictures which we shall hereafter make, it will be seen that we are not among the flatterers of the autocrat. We neither court his smiles, nor fear his frowns—have neither favours to thank him for, nor favours to ask at his hand. No suspicion, therefore, can be attached to the admission of his popularity now recorded, nor to this further one, that the idea of there being *any* difficulty so great that it shall not disappear before him, is as distant from the minds of his people as the thought that the snows of winter should not vanish before the heat of summer.

The advantages which this admiration gives him in accomplishing his measures, and in keeping down the most distant attempt at revolt, are incalculably great. But having exhausted all the themes of wonder that land-adventures could furnish, his majesty is now seeking to prolong the illusion by similar doings *at sea*. He would have visited the fleet even had the weather been fine; indeed, he spends part of every summer on the Baltic; but to join it in the face of what, with Russians, would pass for a serious storm, he knew would cause a sensation — give *éclat* to the manœuvres—which is precisely the effect he aims at in all he does.

To surprise—to impress with an idea of his intrepidity, coolness, and decision—is what he lives for. He has taken another emperor, who long filled the eye

of Europe, for his model in this, as in some other things. "The end is not yet." Will there be any resemblance in their closing destinies?

Nicholas has a strange luck of being caught in storms: he never comes to sea without raising a riot. No state of the elements ever daunts him; and the Russians say, that no degree of labour from exposure in this or any other way can kill him. As yet he has shown no tendency to disease of any kind: his iron frame looks as if nothing could wear it out. He has never been known to complain of fatigue. In reviewing the fleet at this time he was eleven hours on his legs; yet, at the close he looked as fresh as if he had just risen from breakfast. Instead of hastening to repose at the palace, when the survey was over, he landed in Cronstadt to transact business. Among the first sights that greeted us, when permitted to go ashore there, was his imperial majesty, in his inseparable white cap, flying through the streets; with true Russian fury he had thrown himself into the nearest droschky, and was off to the admiralty.

As already hinted, however, the reflections suggested by the overwhelming display of Russian strength, which we witnessed in the Baltic, will be more appropriately given in a subsequent chapter "ON THE NAVAL PROJECTS OF THE EMPEROR," in which we shall also state the full strength of his marine, and give some account of the Russian sailor.

Meantime, let us visit together the much-famed

Cronstadt, the great bulwark of Russia, and the nursery of her navy. As English sailors and English ships may before long have an errand to its walls, we shall give a pretty full account of this most interesting place.

CHAPTER III.

CRONSTADT, ITS FORTIFICATIONS AND COMMERCE.

Unkind reception of strangers—Duke of Wellington in Russia—Castles—Military and commercial harbours—Trade and way of doing business—Heavy duties on British goods—First specimens of Russian manners—Beards—Sheepskins—Paying of wages—Great number of English—The man of languages—Ships detained by the ice—Remissness of the governor—Drunkenness—Few women—Handsome public buildings—Lamps of the Virgin—Superstition of the Greek Church.

When we parted company with the reader, we were gallantly fighting our way past the latest stragglers of the fleet, and the imperial steam-boat itself.

On escaping these formidable opponents we hoped to gain shelter from them, and the rising storm, in the harbour of Cronstadt; but this was contrary to the will and pleasure of our mighty adversary, the Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias. Think only of our hard fate! After wasting so much good admiration on his fleet, he condemned us to lie nearly three days in front of that iron-girt place, bouncing up and down in our poor bark, at the mercy of a strong north-wester, which had wellnigh swamped some of his best seventy-fours! Here we lay, in danger of drifting from our anchor every

minute, without permission to put a foot on shore—literally *prisoners*, closely guarded by a savage who was sent to take care of the cargo, and seemed to regard us as part of it.

Before entering, however, on the narrative of our grievances, let us form some acquaintance with the place where they occurred.

From the length of time which the custom-house people compelled us to spend in our delightful position, and from the opportunities we afterwards had, when permitted to land, the Russians seemed *determined* that we should become fully acquainted with the strength of the fortress;—in this treating us with more regard than was paid even to the Duke of Wellington when in their country. The story goes that the emperor showed the duke all that he thought it *safe* to exhibit, accompanying him every where in person, and loading him with attentions, beyond what were ever shown even to royal visiters. But he wisely paid him the compliment *not to show him Cronstadt*—knowing well that the time may come, when the acquaintance which the duke's quick eye would have formed with its position and defences, would be far from convenient for Russia.

CRONSTADT—at once the Portsmouth and the Liverpool of Russia—her chief naval station, and most thriving trading-port, all in one—stands on a naked, sandy island, about five miles long and one broad, in the middle of the narrowing gulf of Finland, some 20 miles from St. Petersburg, five or six

from the rising shores of Istria on the south, and the same distance from the flatter coast of Carelia on the north. Both channels are of equal depth; but that on the south is preferable. The island is so perfectly level that no ground is seen in approaching it: it looks a vast fortress rising on piles, rather than a town on solid ground.

So strongly is it defended by every device which skill can suggest, that many look upon it as impregnable. One part of its strength lies in the shallowness of the gulf about it: except on one small line, there is not more than eight feet of water all round it. Ships can approach only through a narrow winding channel, with 24 and 28 feet of water, along which stand several fortifications of immense strength—each as formidable as the more celebrated one off Copenhagen—and so placed, that no enemy could pass without being demolished by their united fire. First comes the *Citadel*, of great strength, close by the passage which all ships must take; then follow the frowning batteries on the *Riesbank* rock; and lastly, stronger than all, the *Castle of Cronschlott*, a polygon with double batteries. In addition to all these, a new one is in progress, a shortway to the north-west, founded on piles. This will prevent any attempt to pass up between the island and the shore.

The navigable channel is marked by buoys, which must be sought for the more cautiously as no pilot is allowed. But for the good eyes of one of his pas-

sengers, our poor captain, who had only been once here before, and who was sadly terrified by the gale, now blowing very hard, would have certainly run us aground,—being unable to discover the many little flags through the spray. At last, however, we got fairly opposite the Mole, from which guns were gaping upon us as thick as the cells of a honeycomb. We have seen nothing to compare with the grim bulwark that now frowned over us.

Indeed, whether viewed in detail, or as a whole, Cronstadt is every way worthy to be the outpost of the largest empire in Europe. There is nothing mean or disappointing about it, as is often the case with the first places seen in approaching a new country. It speaks boldly out — an unblushing frontispiece to tales of war and despotism. The remarkable effect which it produced upon us, was doubtless heightened by the animated view through which we had to pass in reaching it. First, as day dawned, we had part of the fleet hovering about us. Then, when morning advanced, we were surrounded by hundreds on hundreds of merchant ships, belonging to every nation of Europe, and all with their colours flying in honour of the occasion—French, Dutch, Greek, Sardinian, American, and, more numerous than all, English—crossing and re-crossing in the most beautiful disorder.

But though this pageantry greatly added to the effect of our first view, Cronstadt must, under any

circumstances, form one of the most imposing sights in the world.

If the truth must be told, we felt far from comfortable while running the terrible gauntlet of the fortresses. But there was no help for us. It was impossible to anchor till we had passed Cronschlott, which fronts the mouth of the mercantile harbour, and is separated from it by a deep roadstead, 2000 paces wide.

When at last we were permitted to lay-to, which was immediately off the military harbour, we were surrounded by steamers, barges, lighters, and half-sunk luggers. We all day kept straining our eyes and our necks to get a glimpse over the mole, but were able to see nothing except the crowds of masts lying snugly within, as dense and naked as a wintry forest.

The bristling wall above us, surmounted by 300 cannon of the largest size, forms a triangle round the whole of the town and its bastions; and is so high that though the place contains 40,000 inhabitants, not a creature was visible; the tops only of the highest houses can be seen from without. The two harbours of the fleet contained only one ship; but in a few days both were to be again crammed with their bulky tenants, now sporting on the Baltic. Behind them lie the slips and powder-magazine, with manufactories of pitch and tar. The admiralty buildings, canals, and docks for repairing and building ships; the foundery, furnishing 1200 tons of bombs and balls

every year, storehouses to which the ships of war can come close when loading, rope-works, boat-houses, &c., are all arranged on the most modern and improved principles.

The great harbour can accommodate with ease thirty-five of the largest ships in the navy, besides their transports, &c. The *second* is intended chiefly for vessels under repair, but is also used as a winter harbour. Both communicate with another vast basin, known as the Italian lake. In all of these, ships are admirably protected from sea and storm; but, owing to the vicinity of the Neva, there is one disadvantage, from which nothing can protect them—the freshness of the water—which destroys the ships with incredible rapidity. The *third*, or commercial harbour, lies to the north-west, close beside the others. It is defended by a rampart of beautiful granite, which is planted with cannon at every second step, and forms the favourite promenade of the citizens,—the view seaward, being very fine, and that towards the town not less interesting. This capacious basin—in which one thousand ships can be accommodated with ease—was crowded to excess at the time of our visit, and presented one of the most singular sights we have ever seen. All large ships engaged in the St. Petersburg trade unload their cargoes, to be transmitted by smaller vessels; the gulf above this being so shallow that no ship drawing more than nine feet can reach the capital. Here also their home cargoes are taken in.

For some years there has been no material variation in the amount of business done here. The present state of its trade is shown by a document in the official journal of the Russian government, the *Gazette de St. Petersbourg;* by which it appears that the number of ships which entered the port from the opening of the navigation to the 5th of November of the current year (1838), was 1343, and the number which left within the same period 1280.

We were never so forcibly struck with the value of her commerce to Russia, as when reminded that very few of the ships around us had brought cargoes with them; that is, Russia has articles to export which all the nations of the world require, and send fleets of their ships to fetch; but so little does *she* need from others, that a few of her own vessels can supply her wants at very small expense. In fact, so immensely does the *bulk*, at least, of her exports surpass that of her imports, that most ships come in ballast. Some English masters may take a cargo to Copenhagen, and then come up here empty, for a freight home; but the duties on most kinds of English goods are so unreasonable that a shipment seldom pays: the tariff indeed, often operates as an absolute prohibition.

Consignments from abroad are nearly all made to houses in St. Petersburg; Cronstadt is a mere shipping station, not the place of business itself. The merchants of the capital either send down their clerks to superintend the loading and despatch of their vessels, or are in constant communication with houses

here who manage this kind of business. The iron (which is the worst freight a vessel gets), flax (the best, because it packs well), pitch, tallow, hides, and all the other articles of Russian export, are brought from the capital in large open lighters, like our herring-boats, which have once been white. These have two singular cross sails, and are managed by two or more men, who were the first specimens we beheld of the genuine unsophisticated Russ.

Almost every person we saw was clad in sheep-skins, made into a kind of short tight surtout, the wool turned in, and the leathery side, intended to be white, shining on the outside, black and filthy as the ungainly persons of their wearers. Every labourer has a beard flowing rough and grisly on his bosom. Knowing that these appendages are subjects of astonishment to strangers, they never pass an English ship without some drollery,—such as bleating in long and helpless tones like a goat, with which the beard gives them title to claim kindred. In fact, the Russian peasants are excellent mimics, and in every way very merry, contented fellows. You never see them rowing home at night without a song, if alone, or hearty shouts of laughter, if there be two. They trim their ragged sails with great dexterity, and if the yard-arm become unruly, and dash them into the sea, they clamber in again, and shake themselves with all the unconcern and something of the grace of Newfoundland dogs; then set to work anew, as gay as if nothing had happened.

There is a curious scene at night on the quay behind the harbour, when all the labourers are mustered on leaving the ships where they have been employed during the day. Such an appearance of hairy, or, if it please you better, woolly gentlemen, we defy the world to match. Here are red beards enough to make cables for the fleet.

The whole of these men are registered by the police, and, in order to prevent robberies, are assembled for inspection when work is over. On inquiring about their wages, we were told that each gets 8½*d.* a-day. We thought them *well* paid for a cheap country: but we forgot where we were—in Russia the poor man's wages are not his own. If he be in the country, the nobleman on whose estate he lives, claims part of his earnings; nay, if he *go away* to work in summer, the law binds him to come back with part of his gain in winter; and here in the seaport, government steps in and takes from each honest creature the lion's share of his earnings: *sixpence* is deducted each day from every man!

The quarter of the town near the landing-place is completely English. In some parts of the harbour you have been passing nothing but English ships; and now, under the arcades, you meet none but English captains. All the dialects from Falmouth to Aberdeen, may be heard in this inelegant lounge; where "English porter," "good butcher-meat," "ship-biscuit," "leather," "ropes," "candles," and other British attractions, are painted at every door.

In short, for a few months in summer, the place is another Wapping. One of the best known frequenters of the piazza is a kind of walking Polyglott. He is a native of Holland, and having been in Java, speaks some of the Eastern tongues as well as most of the European ones. We heard at least eleven languages enumerated among the acquirements of this useful ally of the ship-captains.

There is no good hotel in the town, nor even a tavern of any great pretensions; but of dram-shops with "British spirits," there is great abundance.

The harbours are generally shut up with ice before the end of November; sometimes earlier; and are seldom open before the end of April, or even the 12th of May. The change in winter is singular: not a foreigner is to be seen—fountains, and harbours, and sea for miles on miles around, are as solid as the land—every ship and boat is as motionless as the ramparts, and not a step is to be heard in the streets. In short, so wide a contrast is seldom to be found elsewhere. The population at that season is diminished by at least 15,000; the nobility, and many of the labourers going to St. Petersburg. The winter of 1835-6, however, was an exception. The frost set in so early—nearly as soon as in the famous 1813—that forty English ships were detained the whole season. This was no slight disappointment and loss to the owners. They were all full loaded: another night would have saved them, but the tyrant was relentless; his icy grasp bound them too fast for

escape. They made an attempt to get out. At first it promised to be successful, a breeze had sprung up, and they were making their way by cutting the ice. Very little more would have freed them; but it was too late. Difficulties multiplied as they advanced. The wind and snow fought against them with a fury known only in the Baltic: they had no choice but to return or perish.

For this ruinous detention, government is not without blame. Had more labourers been granted to clear the channel, not a ship would have been kept back. It cannot be supposed that the local authorities were tempted by the prospect of so rich a spoil as would be gained to the place, by caging such a numerous fleet for six or seven months. But the governor is chargeable at least with indecision. The fact is mentioned as one which throws some light on the "system" in Russia. Several fatal accidents had happened among the labourers; for whose lives the governor was responsible to the emperor. If more deaths occurred, he might be called to account by a stern master; but to the merchants he had no account to make. In Russia, no man knows when he is doing right, or when he is doing wrong; nor does he know the extent of the punishment he may be incurring. It was better in this instance to keep himself safe, and let the blame fall on agents whom the emperor cannot punish—the elements.

Let the fault however, have been where it might, the English owners and merchants, both in St.

Petersburg and at home, were heavy losers by the detention; not only from the extent of capital thus locked up, but from the unforeseen expense of the crews, which were more than sufficient to run away with any profits that might afterwards be realized from the cargoes. When vessels come out, intended to remain all winter, the crews are put on half-wages. In such a case as this, when no bargain could have been made, they continue to draw their full allowance.

With so many foreign sailors amongst them, the population of the place does not, of course, present such an exclusively *Russian* aspect, as that of towns in the interior. The first walk in it, however, afforded us many strange sights. Two facts struck us most forcibly. One was the unhappy propensity of the people to drinking; many were to be seen staggering, blind, helpless, rolling in the mud, in a state of the most brutal intoxication. The other national trait which most forced itself upon us, during our first survey, was the practice of secluding their women: we scarcely saw a female in the whole place. Throughout all parts of Russia, except in St Petersburg and Moscow, ten men may always be seen for one female. They are guarded with oriental jealousy. None but the very old or the very young are allowed to gad abroad. In Sweden and Norway the traveller finds none but women to attend him at the inns; in Russia, he finds none but men.

The houses and general arrangement are precisely

like those of all the towns seen from first to last in Russia;—broad, silent streets, straight as an arrow-line—buildings, stiff and formal; the government ones of immense extent, of regular, and generally handsome architecture, and withoutside as within, kept in the highest order.

In fact, the order and efficiency of every thing with which government is concerned, strikes the stranger from the first to the last step he takes in Russia. Nothing has the look of age; nothing betrays the sloven. All appears as fresh and strong as if newly finished. Not a speck of dust is to be seen any where;—from the smart green swallow-tails and well-finished uniform buttons of the clerks, to the good carpets of the handsome rooms in which they write, and the very mats at the door, all is faultlessly neat. The motto of the Russian government would appear to be "Order, Decency." If not able to reform the *private* manners of the lower classes—to clean out the dens of filth in which whole families are stewed up,—their rulers say, "Let us at least have some order in all that is *public*. Let us first give a good example ourselves, where we can enforce it. In evil, example is contagious, and why should it not sometimes be so in good? If the lesson be not tacitly adopted, having reformed ourselves a little, we may, by-and-by, with better grace *compel* the people to do something towards reforming their habits."

The glittering lamp suspended by its gilded

chains, before a picture of the Virgin, in the corner of all public rooms, and in some private ones, reminded us that we were among the votaries of a new religion—new at least to us. This practice is universal in the Greek church, whose sway, it now for the first time struck us, is one of the widest ever exercised by any church. The little lamp which we here first beheld, under the pole as it were, we found almost daily throughout months of constant travel—in the endless plains of Russia—among the Greeks in Turkey and Asia—and finally in the fair Greece itself.

The last time we remember it was in our small chamber beneath the hoary rocks of Delphi. As it glimmered pale above us, through broken slumbers, we at one time fancied it the sacred flame that night and day was fed in the temple of the oracle—our dreams were in the sunny and classic isles of the Egean which we had left. At another, it seemed the taper of some forlorn wanderer, clad in furs and icicles, seeking his way among the arctic snows—our fancies had fled back to the cheerless land where this usage first met us.

What a wide and what an enduring tie is religion! A similar faith unites the most distant regions, and the most dissimilar tribes—makes as brothers the elegant Greek who has a history of centuries, and the barbarous "stranger," whom we heard of but yesterday.

Our first visit to a Russian place of worship,

powerfully reminded us how easily the human mind imposes on itself. The Greek church is, in many respects, purer than the Roman. In nothing are they more distinct, than in the detestation with which images are regarded by the Greek Catholics. Neither as objects of worship, nor as ornaments in churches, are *solid* figures of any kind tolerated amongst them. But, mark the deception which its members practise on themselves: pictures—*surface* representations of the Saviour and Virgin—they not only tolerate, but treat with exactly the same veneration as that which the condemned Roman Catholics show to their statues. Where lies the difference? The Greeks may plead that they keep within the *letter* of the revealed word; but from the *spirit* of the gospel they wander, surely, as far as their opponents.

CHAPTER IV.

THE CUSTOM-HOUSE; OR, THE DELIGHTS OF VISITING THE AUTOCRAT.

Delays on arriving—Compared with those of other countries—Searchers—Luggage sealed—Captivity—Guardian—Annoyance to ship-captains—Danger of letters, and of Russian money—Passports—Disadvantages of being a "gentleman"—Books detained—Tyranny of underlings—Advice about steamers, &c.

THIS is a chapter of woes.

It is intended solely for such as have travelled; who, from its contents, will have the gratification of learning that others have been treated as scurvily as themselves. Yet should untravelled readers wish to profit by our costly experience; or, what is hardly to be expected in these hard-hearted days, should any be moved with sympathy for travellers in difficulty, they too may cast an eye over this sad narrative.

To be more explicit: the annoyances to which we were subjected at Cronstadt, from the absurdity of the custom-house arrangements—and to which all strangers coming to this country by sea are exposed—afford an excellent specimen of the way in which things are managed in Russia.

These delays were so vexatious that, during the first ebullitions of our wrath, we heartily joined in all the railing that was ever uttered against Russian barbarism. Let others take warning by our example, and never seek to visit this country in a trading vessel, but go at once by the steamer to St. Petersburg.

The troubles alluded to are attributable to the regulation which requires that every ship bound for the capital must first be inspected, measured, sealed, reported, and we know not what, before passing this inevitable outport: forms which ship-captains find so perplexing, that they would rather go with little profit to any other country, than come here for great gain. And, if they complain, what must the general traveller have to say, who in other parts of the continent is very little troubled by police or custom-house regulations? In most countries, if there be no quarantine, you step ashore the moment you arrive, throw your passport to the people of the house, and never hear a word more on the subject till you call for it on going away. As for the *visites* at frontiers, the experienced traveller is never annoyed by them; and he would be equally indifferent to the customs' gentry in Russia, were it not for the number of hands through which he is bundled, and the great loss of time they occasion.

The first of the business began some miles below Cronstadt, where we had to lay-to for a visit from the guard-ship. Papers and passports were here examined, and we rejoiced in the thought that we

should be at liberty to land when we pleased, on reaching the port, so as to catch the first steam-boat for St. Petersburg; but our troubles were only beginning. After casting anchor, no one came near us for hours. At last appeared a boat, with a strong crew, from the custom-house—the officer in a blue uniform-coat, the men in short grayish sea-coats, with green jackets below, and belts girding the waist —small round green caps, seamed with yellow cord, wide striped breeches, and boots reaching to the knee—most Russian in their looks, but without the beard. Then began the process of sealing up the hatches; but as they had not brought enough of their filthy wax and gray tape, it was necessary to row ashore for more. We thought we should be allowed to accompany them—but no; we must remain in custody of the man left on board, till it might suit the harbour-master's pleasure to decide our fate.

When the boat returned, the sealing task was continued; but not till the officer had got plenty of "*Essen, Essen,*" as he greedily called it; for all of them have German enough to insist on meat and drink from the foreign captains. His copious meal of beef and sausage, washed down with schnapps and strong ale, had not softened his temper; for on discovering some slight omission on the captain's part, the bear again mustered German enough to exclaim "*Strafe, Strafe!*" his eyes glistening with delight at the idea of inflicting a fine on the worthy man who had fed him.

The sealing was now resumed. Not a particle was left open. Our very writing-materials, nay our walking-sticks, and an old umbrella, were tied together and adorned with the government seal, till the officers at St. Petersburg, twenty miles away, should examine them, and decide whether they could be admitted to the country, without injury to the life of his majesty, or the fortunes of his subjects. We were not allowed even a change of linen.

Letters were strictly searched for; and we should advise the traveller not to bring any *sealed* ones with him if he wish to keep out of trouble: in case of doubt, they search the person, and should any be found, if a fine be not imposed, they will at least send them to the post-office for you.

Particular inquiries were made whether we had any Russian money; a point on which many have got into serious difficulties on coming here. It is the law of Russia that you may take as much paper money *out* of the country as you please, but none of it is ever allowed to come *back*. The object of this regulation is to prevent the introduction of forged notes; but it at times operates very cruelly. People not aware of the law, taking money at other ports from captains or friends, glad to get rid of any surplus notes, are liable, on arriving in Russia, not only to confiscation of the whole, but also to fine and imprisonment. The captain of a ship from Finland was lately placed in great danger, by a mistake of this kind. What heightens the peril is, that you

are supposed not to have any money (Russian *silver* is not included in this law) till you have cleared with the custom-house, which may not be for several days after entering the country: and how is the stranger to pay his way in the mean time? We had very nearly fallen into a scrape on this head, by inadvertently drawing a couple of hundred roubles, to meet unavoidable expenses till we should reach the capital. When our captain saw the notes, he trembled for the safety of his good ship; but fortunately they were never found by any of the officers, and neither confiscation nor stripes ensued. The incident shows the beauty of the Russian "system:" neither captain nor passenger knows what is right or what is wrong. If they would tell people what is forbidden, or what they have to do, there would be no difficulty; but their principle is, "Find out these things for yourself: it is not our business to keep you out of scrapes, but to get you into them if possible."

When hatches and luggage were all sealed, we made sure that now we should be permitted to go ashore;—but patience a little longer. There being nobody to interpret between us and the officers, we could not comprehend all the reasons given for the delay, but understood that we must still remain in custody of the guardian—a personage placed on board each ship the moment she arrives, to prevent smuggling, &c. A second boat's crew came, but not for us: they brought an officer to

inspect the seals, and add a few more to some trifling things which had been overlooked. A third boat came, but the guardian doubted whether he could part with us. Night was now at hand, and we were becoming obstreperous—all in vain.

The boat which did at last come for us, the fifth in the course of the day, was forced to return back without us, it being now too late to do business at the public offices, where we had to appear. The captain went on shore to fight for us; but the only comfort he brought was, that "Thim nasty fellows, the Russians," would not, on any account, allow us to quit the vessel till next day. The poor man was in a sad fright about some gunpowder which he had on board. Whether from political or commercial jealousy we know not, but by the Russian laws not an ounce of this article is allowed to be brought into the country, under pain of total confiscation both of ship and cargo. Some masters surrender what they may have; but the trouble of getting it restored again is so great, that they generally take the shorter method, of throwing it overboard.

When next day came, there was so much sea that few boats could move out of the harbour. Being anxious, however, to effect our liberation, we rowed ashore, in charge of an officer connected with the harbour-office. From the violence of the storm, it took us near an hour to do what may usually be done in ten minutes; the men could scarcely keep

the boat off the mole, where we ran the risk of being dashed to pieces.

We were first taken to the harbour-master, and were bowled from one set of clerks to another, making declarations about ourselves, our objects in coming to Russia, and our luggage. After being detained some hours at this place, we were twice paraded round the ramparts a mile or two, with an officer marching beside us, first to the custom-house, and then to Mr. Foster, secretary to the Admiral of the Fleet (*ex-officio* Governor of Cronstadt), who gave us passports for St. Petersburg, ten roubles being charged for each,—a fee from which all travellers designated as noblemen, officers, or clergymen, are exempted, as well as from others which we paid afterwards. Having been described simply as "English gentlemen," we were included among the ignoble crew of merchants, bank-directors, county members, or such "base bisognos," who alone have the privilege of paying taxes for travelling in this happy country.

There was yet another form to go through at the Swedish consul's, before whom it was necessary to make affidavit of the number of shirts, coats, night-caps, pairs of boots, watches, shirt-pins, &c., in our possession; with warning that if *more* were found when the seals on our trunks should be opened, all we had would be liable to be dealt with according to the will and pleasure of his majesty the emperor.

Before the whole of these matters could be de-

spatched, the day was far gone. Now, however, we were at liberty, and made a visit to our worthy consul, Mr. Booker, who was indignant at the treatment we had met with; but comforted us with the assurance that we had escaped very cheaply compared with some foreigners. From one delay or other we could not leave Cronstadt till past noon on the third day after reaching it. In any other country all our business would have been over in half an hour.

Having by these delays been prevented from taking the morning steamer, we were forced to proceed to St. Petersburg in our old ship. But even after reaching the capital, several days elapsed before we got our luggage. Not a particle of it could we touch. We were told to be thankful if we got it within a week. The ship had first to pass the bridge on the Neva, which is open only for an hour or so at ten in the morning, when perhaps more ships are waiting than could get through in double the time; and after passing the bridge, we had to wait the pleasure of the custom-house inspectors. They gave us very little trouble when the things were opened; much less than we should have had entering by land. Our few books and maps, including even poor innocent "Madame de Genlis," were sealed up and sent to the office of the censor, who having duly examined the same, restored them a few days after.

In no part of the world, as already stated, has the traveller such tedious and provoking formalities to

go through. Even in Holland, where all is stiff and formal, he gets very little trouble. When we visited that country, the ship was detained a couple of hours at Helvoetsluys; her papers were examined, and a guardian put on board, who accompanied us up the Maes to Rotterdam; but all the time the passengers were not once spoken to, being permitted to walk ashore when they pleased, and to take as much of their luggage as might be necessary, till they found it convenient to call an officer to examine and liberate the remainder. In Austria, too (by no means famed for laxity towards foreigners), there is nothing to complain of: landing at Trieste or Venice, the traveller gets off immediately. But in Russia the annoyances are so great, to strangers entering by land as well as to those coming by sea, that we have known travellers who have visited every country of Europe, vow that they would not enter Russia again for any temptation.

It is alleged, that these annoyances are expressly intended to keep foreigners away; the emperor being jealous of the spread of liberal opinions, and unwilling to expose his subjects to contagion. But this can scarcely be the reason; for in no country are strangers better treated, once the first annoyances are over. It is only among the underlings that there is rudeness and rapacity; when you have to do with the *heads* of any department, all goes well. Nothing can surpass the courtesy with which every assistance and explanation is given.

The grievances complained of ought properly to be attributed to a vicious system, which has been so long established that, like other abuses, it cannot be easily reformed. Let every traveller lift his voice against them, and before many years, it will be as pleasant to visit Russia, as any other country. The government is sensitive about the opinions of foreigners, and at this moment in particular, is anxious to stand well with the rest of Europe. Some proof of this is given by the indulgence granted to the Lübeck steam-boats, which proceed direct to St. Petersburg, where passengers have their luggage examined immediately on their arrival.

CHAPTER V.

LANDING AT ST. PETERSBURG.

Approach by sea—Distant view—Disappointment—Unfavourable site —Contrast with other capitals—Strange adventures—Deserted streets —First attempt in a droschky—"Pady! Pady!"—A word to the stranger.

Our first excursion in the Russian capital was one of the strangest ever made.

We had sailed pleasantly up the bay of Cronstadt, a light breeze carrying us quickly past the wooded slopes adorned with *Oranienbaum*, *Peterhof*, and seats of the nobility. We met at least a dozen steam-boats, some with passengers, some on the business of government, and some tugging ships across the shallows. The great number of luggers and small vessels that had gone down, and left their masts projecting above the surface, show that the navigation is not always so pleasant as it was this sunny afternoon.

The Neva is met about sixteen miles from Cronstadt; but the bay continues wide for some miles further. Long before leaving the wider part, our

attention had been drawn from all other objects by the more exciting view of St. Petersburg. Its broad domes glittering with silver stars, and tall spires piercing the sky like pyramids of gold, seen many miles away, make the stranger fancy that he is approaching an oriental, rather than a European city. But, fair as the sight in some respects is, the sea-view of St. Petersburg is, on the whole, a disappointment. It can by no means be compared with the approach to Copenhagen: it is too flat, and presents no imposing *masses* of architecture to the gulf. The domes are scattered wide away from each other, and no houses are to be seen uniting them; they are like the churches of so many separate villages, rather than the ornaments of one compact capital. You long wonder where the great St. Petersburg can have hid itself behind those mud islands, those wide straggling wood-yards, and those red barrack-looking structures that lie so desolate on the flats. The metropolis of a great empire should stand boldly out on the water; but this one chooses to steal away among reeds and bulrushes, sending up a few blazing skyrockets, more like signals of distress than proofs of splendour.

Patience, patience, rude stranger! The shade of Peter the Great will be amply avenged when you get *in* to his capital, and see what it is. But remember, it is only when you have *entered*, that St. Petersburg fills you with astonishment. Other places make all their show without; here it is all within.

The city cannot help its position. It would look better if there were some heights in or near it; there is not one as high as a candlestick in the whole region. The islands and shores about the mouth of the Neva, are perfectly level. They can do wonderful things in Russia; but they have not been able to raise mountains where nature, for miles and miles around, placed only duck-ponds and ague-marshes.

With all our disappointment, however, we should have been glad to have got into the Russian capital, when we found the treacherous breeze dying away, and likely to leave us motionless all night within the sound of its bells. There was barely enough of wind to carry us through the twisting intricate line marked out by flags, as affording the only safe passage for vessels of any size. The young pilot, who here joined, took care to tell us that there are but seven and a half feet of water allowed by the charts, while the wide sands on each side, where a few people were fishing in small boats, have scarcely two and a half feet upon them. That we might have no doubt on the subject, and to let the captain know the value of the services which he was not inclined to pay so high for as demanded, he managed to let us touch a moment, exclaiming, "Ship's aground, sir!"* to the great

* English is literally the language of the sea. Our nautical terms are used all over the world, not only in addressing English sailors, but between the natives of foreign countries themselves. This is more particularly the case, however, in the north of Europe. A Swedish mate gives nearly all his directions in English; and here we find a Russian pilot employing the same language to a Swede; taking it for

confusion of our friend. We got safely off, however; but were forced to drop anchor in the mouth of the river, where the first lonely houses begin; there being no wind to carry us against the current, up to the centre of the city. We had been nine days from Stockholm.

Here, then, commenced our landing adventures. We were rowed ashore *within sight* of the principal part of the city, but a long way from it, in some remote suburb—Rotherhithe, Redriff, or such like place, perhaps; consequently we had to seek our way for two or three miles, with scarcely a word of the language to seek it with. What was worse, we had not the *Russian* name of the street we wanted; and the *English* one was of no use. Had we been able to pronounce the *Galernoy Oulitza*, we could at once have been rowed or driven to it; but to ask for it as the *English Back Line*, by which it is known among the British settlers in these parts, only made the bearded passenger pity our helplessness.

We addressed a large crowd of respectable people in French, but none understood us. On and on we wandered, always with a correct idea of the quarter our contemplated resting-place was in, but prevented by canals from getting the way we wanted. St. Petersburg is not like London, or any other capital where the numerous inns or lodging-places enable the

granted that, whatever country he might belong to, he would understand enough of English to enable him to communicate on matters connected with the ship.

stranger, even though he cannot speak the language, to get at least shelter and food, till he finds some one who can help him. Here there are very few hotels or places of entertainment, even in the best part of the city, and none at all in the remote ones. Had we seen a sign, or even an "open door," we should soon have taken possession in one way or other, and not have run the chance of wandering all night in the streets. In London, a hackney-coach, or cab or omnibus, may be got at the most remote corner of its wide-spread suburbs; but here, after walking miles, we saw no vehicle of any kind.

What a desert the place seemed! and, except in the very centre, it *is* a most desolate city. The buildings, you would say, have outgrown the population; only they all look so fresh and well painted, that they cannot be quite abandoned. Houses, houses—streets, streets, and very handsome ones; we thought they were never to have done; but still no people. It was broad daylight, yet all was silent, all inhospitable.

At last one person did address us. He had overheard our English; but, strange to say of a Russian, though, by his own confession, he had been three years in London, and two in Paris, he knew very little English, and no French. It is a proof of the paucity of inns here, and shows what sort of a place it is, when this man—an inhabitant—did not know of a single place we could go to; although we were at the time not far from a very important part of the city.

Forward we still hied, evidently getting into a more populous region. The tide of life was surging stronger; still no help, no sign of land. It was now getting dark, but we did not lose courage. We passed a theatre, and churches, and squares, and bridges—when, lo! an acquaintance appears—no less a personage than Peter the Great himself—the very monarch whose proud work we had been thinking evil of, come out on horseback, with his laurel crown on his head, to assist and welcome us. We knew him and his horse, and the very stone they were standing on, quite well—from pictures, namely; and the first glimpse of him dispelled our fears; we had reached friendly and frequented haunts—the very centre of the capital.

But which way to go? Peter could not be expected to accompany us, for it had begun to rain.

At this moment aid was sent in the shape of a long-bearded droschky-man. He saw we were at a loss—knew what we wanted, though we could not speak a word to him—and, as he had an honest face and intelligent eye, we at once took our seats in his vehicle, leaving him to dispose of us at his pleasure.

"*Traktir! Traktir!*" said he, in Russian. "*Jah! Jah!*" answered we, in German, never doubting that *Traktir* meant an inn of some kind or other.

But then his droschky puzzled us. We had often heard of droschkies; but to hear and read of droschkies is one thing, and to be called on to sit

in one, without getting a lesson in the art, is quite another. We were completely mystified and no less completely amused by our strange position: we knew not how to sit, whether sideways or astride, whether with face or back foremost. *N'importe!* It was neck or nothing with us. So away we splashed o'er bridge and stone, clinging to the vehicle as we best could, laughing at ourselves, and, doubtless, making others laugh to see us sitting so funnily. Droschkies, we thought, must be very insecure things; for we were often like to be tumbled out from our awkwardness. But these difficulties our zealous driver did not see; or, if he saw, he heeded them not.

"*Pady, pady!*" was his order. Clear the way—here come two foreigners to look at the emperor, and to pay me well. "*Pady, pady!*"

With all this, however, we were never coming to a stand-still; and we knew nothing about where he was driving us to. We had all along been on the outlook for a shop where German or French might be spoken, and were in the very streets for them; but it was so dark that we could scarcely read the sign-boards. At last, in a broad and handsome street, we caught the cheering inscription, "English Tailor, from London;" and, never doubting that we should here find help, we made our charioteer stop, that, through the expected interpreter, we might hold some parley with him about the place he might be taking us to. But, to our dismay, no one was to be found that could speak to us; so *Pady, pady!* was again the word, and, in

a short time our doubts were dispelled, when the horse stopped, and his master pointed, with a grin of delight at his own sagacity, to the shield of a German tavern, inscribed "*Gasthaus, Wittwe.*" This was nearly what we wanted; but not exactly the place itself. The widow's waiters soon told the man where we wished to go, and back we started all the way over the ground he had brought us; for, had we but taken the good Peter's hint, we were close by the desired locality when he first appeared to us.

A kind reception soon made us forget our street vagaries. They had not been altogether unprofitable, for we had seen and learnt more of this huge place the first night of our arrival, than many do in the first week. The remote outskirts we should never have seen at all, but for our unwonted landing. They had also taught us a lesson, which we record for the benefit of other wanderers—never to enter a strange city without knowing at least the name of the street they are in search of. Even had our difficulties been greater, we should have forgotten them on seeing that our arrival had made *one* creature happy—the poor droschky-man; who, for the four roubles he had gained, bowed himself to the ground, and "kissed the hem of our garment," after the fashion of his country, as grateful and as much overjoyed as if he had driven the Tzarevitch.

CHAPTER VI.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS AMONG THE SPLENDOURS OF THE RUSSIAN CAPITAL.

Hospitality — Letters of introduction—Danger of giving *names* in books on Russia—Numerous sights—The palaces—Hermitage, &c. —Peter's cottage—Magnificence of the principal streets—Style of architecture—*How* the city has been raised—Proprietors compelled to build—Buildings-board—Foot-pavements—Effects on the ladies —Italian architects—Reflections—Perishable splendour — Critical situation of the houses—Inundations.

THE two great subjects to which all writers on St. Petersburg first turn their readers' attention are, its hospitality and its sights; for both of which it has long been famed, beyond most of the cities of Europe.

Of its *hospitality* we also should wish to say much. But nothing being so offensive to the really hospitable man as the parade of his courtesies in print, we shall simply state that we had not been long amongst its inhabitants until we had ample proof of the justice of the assertion, that nowhere is the stranger honoured with such unbounded attention.

We cannot leave this topic altogether, however, without adding a note of advice for our travelling countrymen, regarding the necessity of providing themselves with good introductions, before coming

here. Englishmen are always too negligent of this. We have known some set out on the tour of Europe without a single letter, beyond a pretty substantial one from Coutts' or Herries'! Now, without recommending the German system, which is to get a trunk-full of letters, when they can be got, and to deliver every one of them, even should there be one hundred and twenty (the number brought over by a recent visiter when he came to make a book about us), we should advise the stranger who wishes to enjoy his visit to St. Petersburg, to furnish himself with at least the twentieth part of the German allowance; and if but one-half of these are as well attended to as ours were, he will long look back with pleasure to the happy and instructive hours enjoyed on these distant shores.

Without introductions, no stranger can make his way in the Russian capital; with them, he will be loaded with attentions. Many Englishmen who come here are so coldly welcomed, that they go away disappointed with the people and the country. But they are themselves to blame for having found St. Petersburg naught and unprofitable. A single good letter would have enabled them to spend their time both instructively and agreeably. Travellers passing by Berlin cannot do better than provide a few letters there; such, from the present intimacy between the two courts, being the most influential that can be procured.

Were we to follow out the German example we

ought, at least, to give a list of all who entertained us, even though the reason given at the commencement of the chapter may prevent us from enlarging on their kindness; but English taste repudiates the trick of giving weight to a work by filling it with eminent names, and thereby throwing the responsibility of its statements on individuals who cannot answer for themselves.

Another fashion—we will not call it a German one, because only *one* German has been found capable of adopting it—is, to use the opportunities which introductions give, for laying bare the sacred privacies of domestic life—for sporting with the afflictions(!) of the family who unsuspectingly gave the ribald jester shelter at their board—and sometimes even for traducing the character of his entertainers! This fashion, however much its adoption might add to the piquancy of his work, no English writer will ever adopt.

The consideration, however, which principally induces us to refrain from mentioning *names* in these pages, is the danger in which the most respectable individuals have sometimes been involved, by the rashness of travellers in this respect. Foreigners who allude to politics in their works, ought never to give the name of any private friend; for many have been exposed to merciless persecution—to the dungeon, and to exile—in consequence of having been mentioned by travellers whose political remarks are unpalatable to the government. To be named in such a work, were it only in the way of well-meant compliment, or thoughtless gratitude, at once exposes the indivi-

dual to the suspicion of having furnished the obnoxious intelligence, although he may not have opened his lips on politics. There are other continental states also, where the same caution would be necessary: there is an English book of Travels in Southern Italy, which had the effect of compromising some of the first noblemen of the country so seriously, that they were thrown into prison, and never again allowed to breathe the air of freedom.

The *sights* of St. Petersburg cannot be dismissed so briefly as its hospitality; yet on these also we shall try to be as little tedious as possible. In fact, all the objects worthy of notice—churches, palaces, public buildings — have been so fully and so ably described by Dr. Granville, or other travellers, that it were idle to attempt going over the same ground with them in a work of this nature. Mere sight-*seeing* is the most wearisome occupation in the world, except it be that of *reading* about sights. Chairs, tables, washhand-basins, mirrors—empresses' bedrooms, and emperors' writing-tables, —are most useful, and may be most edifying things in their way; as well as imperial nightcaps, and pincushions; but no one who has endured the infliction of following a gilded lackey from room to room—up stairs and down stairs—from pantry to garret—over miles of carpet and wax-cloth; or, taking out-of-doors work, no one who has trudged through enchanted gardens and mazy woods, seven acres square, adorned with metal waterfalls, and timber grottoes, and peopled with playful dolphins and spouting lions,

with Dianas, Apollos, Mercuries, Fawns, Floras, Phœbuses—Neptunes and their cars, Ariadnes and their bulls—long-legged cranes and long-legged nymphs—frogs, gladiators, tritons—monsters of every shape, and size, and colour that stucco and gilding can produce; no one who has discharged these melancholy duties,—in every country the heaviest of all the taxes that the traveller pays for his more instructive pleasures,—will be surprised that a fellow-sufferer declines to give a narrative which would only revive forgotten woes.

If it were not treason against the sight-loving tribe, we should say that there are ways in which both the traveller's and the reader's time may be much more profitably employed, than on the mere shows of foreign countries. A day passed among the crowds of a great capital—in the streets—in the unvisited purlieus—in the märkets—the bazaars—wherever the moving, *living* multitude may be seen—is more instructive, ay, and more amusing, than a dozen of days spent among glittering rooms and gingerbread pleasure-gardens; and he who could faithfully describe what he sees in such scenes, would make a more attractive book, and deserve better of his country, than all the marvel-hunters that ever wrote. A single hour spent in the heavy vapours of an hospital, or in the cold cells of a public prison—full of sad and painful thoughts as that hour may be—will give more real insight into the spirit and character of a nation, than can be drawn from whole months

frittered away among the thousand artificial sights which the idle most delight in.

That we are using a wise discretion in not attempting a minute, day-by-day description of St. Petersburg, the reader will himself readily admit, on hearing the bare names of all the places he would have to wander through, under only one division of its sights—namely, the palaces. First would come the *Winter Palace*, which, with its dependencies, forms the largest royal residence in Europe, being capable of lodging twelve thousand souls; or rather, it was capable; for, since we left Russia, it has unfortunately been burnt down, and (such is Russian energy) again raised from its ashes, with a splendour scarcely inferior to that in which it formerly gloried.

Next, were we to attempt a minute description, would follow what may be called continuations of the palace just named, the *Hermitage* and *Theatre of the Court*, the *Marble Palace* and that of *Constantine*—all on the Neva. Even without leaving the capital, we should still have, in addition to these, a long series of royal residences to visit; such as the *old* palace *Mikhailoff*, near the summer garden, built by the Emperor Paul, and the scene of his assassination—now occupied as a school for young engineers; the *Taurida* Palace (in the Vosskrecenskaia street), presented by Catherine to Potemkin for conquering the Crimea, but afterwards purchased by government; the *new* palace *Mikhailoff* (between the old one of the same name and the Nefskoï

Prospekht), finished in 1832, as a residence for the Grand Duke Michael, brother of the emperor; the *Anitchkoff* Palace (in the Nefskoï, near the bridge of the Fontanka), built by the Empress Elizabeth in 1748, and occupied as the private palace of the present emperor. Such are the names of a few of the palaces *in* the capital. On the islands, or in the immediate neighbourhood, are the *Summer Palace* of the late emperor, and that built by Nicholas; *Catharinenhof*, &c. &c. *Peterhof*, a favourite seat of the emperor on the bay of Cronstadt; and *Tzarkoie-Celo* (meaning "the village of the Tzar") 15 miles on the Moscow road, are familiar to all who have opened a book on Russia.

Were we to give a description of any of the palaces, it would be of the little cottage in which Peter the Great lived, while laying the foundations and superintending the progress of his new capital. Many relics and memorials of him are preserved about St. Petersburg, as well as at Peterhof and Cronstadt; but this is by far the most interesting. It is a simple Scotch "but and a ben," but with a greater profusion of windows than Scotch cottages can boast of. The small sleeping-room is immediately opposite the entrance; but neither in it, nor in the other rooms, is door or ceiling high enough for a tall visiter. It is built of logs, painted to resemble bricks. The walls are hung with coarse canvas, whitewashed; the only piece of luxury being round the doors, which

are edged with a pennyworth of flowered paper. To preserve this modest mansion from decay, a good brick house has been built round it; within which it nestles as dry as a kernel in its shell. In the space between the cottage and its case, lies a very appropriate relic of the illustrious apprentice in the dock-yards of Saardam—the boat built by his own hands, in which he rowed about the Neva to his different works. The only furniture in the room are a few glass-cases, with rings, lamps, medals, and other remembrances of the first tenant, all under charge of an old soldier, who lives by selling tapers to those who worship at the rude shrine standing in the corner of one of the chambers.

In these humble rooms, then, scarcely ten feet square, lived the great founder of this city of palaces! Touched by the simplicity and self-denial manifested by his preference of this plain mansion, we were about to leave the spot with increased admiration for one of the most remarkable men that ever lived; but, as we were turning away, a woman in respectable mourning came in. She was in deep grief—bowed herself on her knees before the shrine, and with sobs smote her forehead to the dust. It was a mother mourning for her son. The thought now struck us, that he whom we had just called "great," also had a son, but the remembrance of that son's terrible death, made us change the epithet into "cruel."

Could the prison-scenes of Alexei Petrovitch, reck-

less though he was, be blotted from history, the name of Peter would be one of the brightest in its ample page.

The list of public edifices in St. Petersburg is larger even than that of its palaces. There are churches, prisons, hospitals, cabinets, libraries, seminaries, museums, picture galleries, theatres, barracks, &c. &c., more than could be walked through in a month, or read of in a week. For the reasons already given, however, no attempt will be made to describe the whole of these: all that is here proposed, is to notice only a few of the more modern and most striking sights. Meanwhile let us say a few words of the *general* impression which it produces on the stranger.

No capital of Europe surprises so much as St. Petersburg. The width and regularity of the streets —the long lines of houses, generally of uniform plan, and all looking as if new—the breadth and solidity of the quays—the stout masonry of the canals—the excellence of the pavement and the comfort of the foot-walk; these are so different from all presented by other continental cities, that the stranger is literally amazed. The magnitude of the scale on which every thing is done, and the solidity of much (we do not say *all*) that has been reared, admirably correspond with the greatness of the empire. Another consideration which increases the stranger's wonder, is the expenditure which they must have occasioned. Stones and pillars, many tons weight, are lavished as

if they could have been charmed into their place by a word; but, in fact, each of them had to be brought an immense distance, at enormous expense. That the stranger should be surprised on reflecting, that all this has been done in so short a time—has risen like a vision of the night—some may think superfluous, for he has been well prepared for it; yet when he feels himself actually in the midst of the splendours of this new city, walking upon and touching them, he may be excused for marvelling, and almost for doubting, whether the surrounding scene could really have been but a neglected marsh, or at most, a fishing-village of poor Fins, little more than a hundred years ago! Palaces, cathedrals,—triumphal arches, and monumental statues, all of most tasteful design and most costly workmanship, standing in thick and fair array, where so lately the nest of the bittern or the floating cradle of the water-hen were, the proudest works of architecture! It *must* be a dream!

One point which particularly excites surprise is, the freshness, the seeming newness of every thing. It is not as in the ancient capitals of Europe, where the eye is offended by whole streets of houses decaying and out of order: here, things have not had time to go wrong; and, what is more, they are not allowed to do so. The plasterer's trowel and the painter's brush are set to work every year, all over the city. Nor are repairs left to the caprice or indolence of the individual proprietor. Government steps in—for in this country, government does every thing—and tells

him, you *must* make such and such repairs. Your *Ukase* is a powerful conservator. It can create, too, as well as preserve; for much of St. Petersburg has been built by compulsion: it would never have attained half its present magnitude, but for the interference of the authorities, who used to say, in very plain terms, "You who have this income or that, this or that number of houses, are hereby called upon to build forthwith so many more; and you who have but half of what your neighbour possesses, must just follow with half of what he is put down for."

Every thing connected with the streets, new buildings, &c., is under the direction of a Board, without whose sanction it is not allowed to make any alteration even in an old building. No man can follow his own plan as to the *outside* of a house, whatever he may do *within;* a system which may sometimes press hard on individuals, but is on the whole a good one, preventing those monstrosities with which other capitals abound, when every proprietor is left to indulge his own fantasies. The good effect of this arbitrary way of doing things is well shown by the handsome foot-pavements. These English luxuries are so rare abroad, that we were not prepared to find almost every street here well furnished with them. Twenty years ago, scarcely one was to be seen; but the mystery was explained, when we were told that it was all in consequence of the Emperor Alexander's visit to London, after the Peace, when he was so much delighted with our pavements that, the moment

he returned, an *Ukase* appeared, enjoining every proprietor to lay the footpath in front of his house with slabs. It was of no avail to remonstrate. The party might say that his means were inadequate to this unexpected outlay; his want of means could not be put in balance with the emperor's wishes. There was no remedy but to obey; for if the Sultan has but one short answer to those who refuse his application for money, "Compliance, or the bastinado," so his neighbour, the Tzar, with equal brevity, declares "Obedience, or Siberia!"

These *trottoirs* have not only done much towards improving the look and comfort of his capital, but have also, to a certain extent, been auxiliary in reforming the habits of his subjects. Formerly, scarcely a woman was to be seen in the streets of St. Petersburg; the stones were so rough, or the mire so deep, that the poor creatures could not venture out. They sat stewing at home, without sun or air, in the close unhealthy atmosphere of their stoves, with cheeks as white as plants trained in darkness. But now, since the foot-pavements have enabled them to make the wonderful discovery that they can walk, the St. Petersburg ladies come boldly abroad; not in such numbers as the fair sex of other countries, but still in very creditable proportion, considering the recent date of their enfranchisement. These innovations have also enabled them to make another agreeable discovery—that exercise of this kind gives a health to the frame more vigorous than that derived from the

midnight waltz, and lends a bloom to the cheek more attractive than that of the rouge of which they formerly made so liberal a use.

Every country has a style of architecture, or, if that word be too high, of building, peculiar to itself; and nowhere is the style of each more conspicuous than in its capital. Russia also has a style of its own; but there is little of it seen in St. Petersburg. He who comes here expecting to find something national and characteristic in the general appearance of the houses, will be completely disappointed: except for the churches, a stranger, in walking through it, might suppose himself in some new city of Italy, of France, or of Germany; for it has a little of the manners of each of these countries; being precisely such a place as would be made by taking the large plain houses of the *Rue de la Paix*, of Paris, or of the new streets of Frankfort, and uniting them in straight endless streets with some of the ornamental buildings of the different towns of Italy. Little wonder that it has not a *Russian* look; for until lately, no Russian had any share in adorning it: not only the palaces but all the streets were built by *foreign*, chiefly Italian, architects.

Among the various surprises excited by St. Petersburg, the greatest of any felt by the stranger is—that it should have been built here at all. Whatever the city may have gained in strength against an enemy, by being placed in this position, it has lost in security from inundations, as well as in beauty. The

object of its founder in planting it among inaccessible swamps, was to render it more safe from his active foes; but the ground is so low that the Neva at times sweeps irresistibly over a great part of the city. The inundations have often risen so high as to threaten the complete submersion of the finest quarters. In 1828, the waters raged over every barrier, and occasioned great loss, not only of property, but of life. The tzar wept like a child when he looked from his palace windows, and saw the disastrous spectacle. The height to which the waters reached in many of the most crowded streets, is still shown by a line on the houses, especially in the Vassilii-island, where the destruction was dreadful. Eyewitnesses say, that the heaps of dead bodies taken from the houses, and piled up till the water should retire, and permit the earth to receive them, formed the most appalling sight they ever beheld—melancholy monuments of their "great" emperor's energy and rashness. Had he but gone ten miles further up the river, a site would have been found fully as advantageous for commerce, the stream being navigable all the way, and much more safe; the height of the banks above the water being such that no flood can overflow them.

What a place would St. Petersburg have become in a situation presenting greater natural beauties! It would then have been the most beautiful city in the world; now it is only the most wonderful.

Yet the beauty and regularity of this capital be-

come less wonderful when we consider how different its origin has been from that of others. Other cities have grown up at random, from small beginnings. They are the work of centuries; each succeeding improver has to contend against, or remove, what has been done by his predecessors. But St. Petersburg is the creation of a day; and having been begun at once on a great and regular plan, its beautifiers have only had to *add* to what was done, not to *undo*. Nor are they hampered by what in many continental cities renders improvements impossible,—an insurmountable line of fortifying walls, whose narrow limits forbid our modern Augustuses to convert narrow alleys and ten-story houses into spacious squares and gardened villas. St. Petersburg never had nor needed walls. The batteries of Cronstadt and the shallow mouths of the Neva are the best bulwarks in the world. So long as these remain, there will be no need of walls to keep this city from going on increasing, till the very waters, which now constitute its best defence from the foe, shall at last sweep over it in scorn.

The Russian capital has filled the nations with wonder by its sudden rise: is it to fill them with greater wonder by its yet more sudden fall? Shall the proud monarch of the north hear it said of his darling seat, as was said to the repining prophet of the gourd which had made him so "exceeding glad,"—"It came up in a night, and perished in a night!" Such a calamity, if we may believe those who have

long resided here, is by no means improbable. Even if spared by the flames, which in Russia soon lay cities low, it is so liable to suffer from inundations, that it may one day be necessary to abandon it altogether.

CHAPTER VII.

THE NEVA; AND GENERAL VIEW FROM ISAAC'S BRIDGE.

Attractions of the river—Compared with the Thames—The great bridge —Magnificent prospect—General sketch of the city from this point —The public buildings within view—Divisions of the city—Its progress—The islands—The quays—Want of trees.

In attempting to give a general idea of St. Petersburg, we would begin with its finest and most distinguishing feature — the Neva; the noblest of city rivers.

Englishmen are proud of the Thames; and with reason. It is a noble river; but will not compare with the Neva. The one flows smooth and voiceless, afraid to disturb the slumbers of the aldermen who are its masters, and keep it in awe: the other rushes swift as the tempest—roars like an untamed savage, fresh from his native deserts, caring neither for citizen nor emperor, who have in vain tried to subdue him. The spirit of old Father Thames is broken by the insults we have heaped upon him; ugly black lines of mud defile his shores; we turn the ends and backs of our houses to him, as if he were not worth looking at, and set down such buttresses of masonry to support the bridges across him, that he cannot move them

even in his fury. Instead of displaying banners along his banks, and doing all we can to make him sensible of his importance and our gratitude, we affront him in the most atrocious manner; hanging out dyers' poles and washerwomen's ropes, with old linen, flannel petticoats, and other unutterable tatterdemalion things, fluttering so insultingly in the breeze, that the poor river skulks along in shame, glad to hide his head among the brewers' vats of Southwark, or underground in Mr. Brunel's tunnel—any where to be out of sight.

But the Neva asserts his privileges, and is honoured with becoming respect. The emperor himself rears his beautiful palace on his banks, unfurls his proudest banner in his honour, and does all he can to coax him into good humour; bringing sweet flowers to please him with their perfume, spreading trees to shade him from the sun, and costly statues to adorn his path. Nor are the citizens ashamed to come and look at him, but have built strong walls along his banks, as costly as palaces, supporting broad avenues, corresponding to his own majesty, and long lines of splendid mansions, from whose windows it is the pride of the richest and the fairest to look on his ample tide; while, instead of insulting him, by blocking up his bed with pillars that cannot be shaken, they every autumn clear the way for him, by removing the bridges which, in his vernal joy, he would take very good care to remove for himself. In return for this courtesy of theirs, he lays himself calmly down to rest when winter comes, and allows his children to

dance and sing, and play upon his breast, throughout the long slumber that will again give him vigour to bring them bread and wealth—gold and rich argosies —in summer.

The Neva enters the sea by many branches, along all of which, portions of this great capital or of its suburbs are built; but the only one with which we have to do is the principal one, called the Grand Neva, on which stand the finest parts of the city. The chief point is at the Isaac Bridge, which passes from Isaac Square on the mainland, to the rich and populous quarter built on the Vassilii-ostroff (*Basil's isle*), which, from its size and importance, is termed, pre-eminently, *the* Island. This square, which is adorned with Peter's statue, the admiralty, the cathedral of St. Isaac, the senate-house, &c., and unites with the admiralty square, may be called the heart of St. Petersburg, all the great lines from the remotest extremities centring in it more or less directly.

The bustle and gaiety always seen on the bridge, from the crowds of pedestrians and showy equipages constantly moving on it, or on the quays stretching right and left, make it one of the most attractive stations in the whole city. The bridge itself, built entirely on boats, is not the least curious object. Though fully one thousand and fifty feet long, and about sixty wide, it is entirely of wood—not painted white and handsome, however, like the wooden bridges in other countries, but rough and dark-looking. The roadway is of squared logs, enormously thick;

they are left quite naked, without gravel or composition of any kind over them. Though only a bridge of *boats*, it is not so low as that term would lead some to suppose. The huge beams, slanting upwards from twenty boats, or rather pontoons, anchored in the river, are so long that they elevate the roadway nearly to the height of ordinary bridge-paths. Though very strongly moored, the pontoons are kept in their places with great difficulty, owing to the violence of the current, which occasions a loose rocking motion, perceptible in passing from one joint to another; but the work is secure enough to support any number of the heaviest waggons that could find room upon it; the yielding of the boats being in favour of its strength. The enormous joints can all be floated away separately; each pontoon carrying off its own share of the roadway. Some of them are taken to the side at two o'clock every morning, to let ships pass to the custom-house, where they unload under the eye of the officers; and every year, before the ice forms, they are all removed; because, if left, the floating ice, when summer arrives, would destroy them. All communication between the opposite banks is, of course, interrupted until the ice is fully formed; after which the *whole* river is a bridge, and a fair, too; games and festivities of all kinds being carried on upon its bosom throughout the long winter. There is again an anxious interruption when the thaw begins, till the floating ice has cleared away sufficiently to permit the re-establishment of the bridge. These

interruptions occasion such a serious break to the intercourse both of trade and of friendship, that it has long been projected to build a stone bridge at this point; but there are difficulties to be surmounted, which, as well as the great expense, have always retarded the execution, and left to the present emperor the glory of adding one beautiful monument more to the many that adorn his capital. It is believed that, when other projects shall allow him leisure, he will build not only a bridge of stone, but also complete the quays which are still unfinished. The great depth of the Neva, in many places said to be at least fifty feet, and the flatness of its banks, render it difficult to lay a sufficient foundation, either for the pillars of a stone structure, or for the piers of a suspension bridge.

We have mentioned this bridge so particularly, because it is to it that we would beg the reader to accompany us, as the point best suited for enabling him to form a general idea of St. Petersburg, and of the position of its principal ornaments. Standing with the face up the river, we have, 1st, The *mainland* on the right; 2d, the *Vassilii-Ostroff* on the left; and, 3d, farther up the river, *Trinity* Island, separated from the Vassilii by a very wide arm of the stream. On the third division stands what is called the *Old* city: it was the part first built by Peter; and here his cottage, already mentioned, still remains. It has become the most desolate-looking portion of the whole. It is now united to the main-

land by the enormous moveable bridge of Troitskoï, which is 2456 feet long. At first, however, all building was confined to the two islands. No one thought of taking up his quarters on *terra firma* till 1705, two years after the first foundations of old St. Petersburg were laid; but the example being once given, the buildings increased so rapidly, that the quarter on the mainland soon became, and is still, by far the largest and most splendid of the capital.

Having thus explained the general position of the three principal divisions of the city, we may next mention some of their particular ornaments. Such a view as now lies around us can seldom be equalled. Nearly all the finest objects of the capital are within sight. On either hand are the magnificent quays, adorned by long lines of buildings, rivalling the finest in Europe; the public structures mingling harmoniously with, but scarcely outshining, those of the rich private citizens. The Vassilii quay, stretching only a short way up the river, but extending for miles down toward the sea, is adorned with the Academy of Arts, the Mining College, the College of Cadets, &c., all handsome, with lines of streets behind them, penetrating far away to the other side of the island. Up the river, and round the Strelka (battery) point, are the Academy of Sciences, the Exchange, the Custom-house, the Rostral Columns, with dense masses of shipping in front. In old St. Petersburg are seen the imposing

citadel, containing the cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul, surmounted by a lofty gilded spire. Behind this, among the mazy branches of the river, lie numerous other islands, *Petrofski, Krestofski (isle of the Cross), Ielaghine, Kammenoi (Stone island)*, and *Apothecaries' Island*, with its botanic garden, and nearly 4000 feet of glass-houses: but these are all out of sight from the point where we now stand. The whole of the islands of St. Petersburg are of considerable size; not little rocks like those of Stockholm, but wide flats covering many acres—in one instance several miles. What a contrast they present to the romantic islets of the Mälar!

Crossing the river to the right, the eye rests on the most splendid part of all—the fair line of royal dwellings already mentioned, beginning in the distance with the Marble, and ending with the Winter Palace, where the splendid buildings of the Admiralty begin; all of which together present to the view a full mile of the most beautiful architecture in the world, scarcely broken the whole way, from the admired railing of the Summer-garden down to the end of the bridge, where, as already stated, stands the Isaac square, encircled by so many ornaments. From this square, the eye, travelling *down* the stream, takes in the whole of the English quay, composed of a line of most elegant houses, occupied by the principal nobility, the English merchants, the great bankers, the club-houses, the English factory,

&c., with storehouses and other government structures innumerable, in the distant outskirts about the mouth of the river.

This is but a mere outline, a most meager sketch of some of the objects seen from the bridge. As yet we have mentioned only those on the river; but far off also, wherever the eye may wander, especially towards our right, where the city with its long streets spreads backward for miles, objects of magnificence and beauty are seen. The number of gleaming domes, many pealing forth their sweetest tones, rising over miles of land and island, is countless. The great part of the shipping, we have said, is out of sight, round the Vassilii point: here are only the arrivals of the day, waiting by the bridge till the hour of opening.

No large vessels being ever allowed to discharge their cargoes on the principal quays, they are always free from confusion, and the margins of the river are thus not so much encumbered with shipping, as to diminish its noble breadth. Barges, piled high with charcoal, or other kinds of fuel—huge vessels with stones for some public building—long clumsy structures, with open sides, for fishmongers and washerwomen—compose the floating tenantry of the river's edge; but, numerous though they may be, they form but a slender line on each side, compared with the ample stream. Its bosom, however, is continually enlivened by numerous pleasure-boats, gaudily adorned, shooting in every direction, some

hastening up from the bay, some from the large building-yards, where ships are seen in progress at various stations along the river, and some conveying gay parties to visit their friends on the opposite bank. The great bridges being too far apart to suffice for the intercourse of such a large population, crowds of trim ferry-boats are constantly plying at different points.

Beautiful as the view which we have been enjoying on the grand Neva certainly is, it has one great defect—want of trees. Some are seen, but not nearly enough. A line of foliage along the quays would be an immense improvement to them, and most welcome to the eye. The houses now look too harsh, too cold. Miles of stone and window-glass fatigue, even when the architectural combinations are faultless. The Chiaja, at Naples, is one of the most beautiful lines of building in Europe; but without the fresh verdure of the Villa Reale running parallel to it, it would be insupportable. To drive along it, day after day, without some relief, would burn the eyes from their sockets. What then must he the effect of the verdureless splendours of St. Petersburg?

CHAPTER VIII.

GLANCE AT THE MONUMENTS, CHURCHES, AND STATISTICS OF ST. PETERSBURG.

ALEXANDER'S COLUMN, the finest monument in the world—Singular anecdote of Russian obedience—Equestrian statue of Peter the Great—Passion of the Russians for monuments of this kind—Russian churches—General description—Feelings excited by their splendour—Trophies from the French and Turks preserved in them—Too much gilding—Pictures—Reverence for them—New cathedral of St. Isaac—Convent of St. Alexander Nefsky—Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul—Tombs of Peter and the Tzars—Cathedral of our Lady of Kasan—Foreign churches—Other public buildings—Size and population—Manufactures—Exports and Imports.—Great manufactory at Alexandrofsky—General Wilson—Porcelain and glass manufactories.

TURNING away from our bridge, let us now survey some other portions of this fair city.

There are few squares in St. Petersburg; where all the streets are wide and airy, they are less wanted than among the narrow alleys of other capitals. It contains, however, many *open spaces*, surrounded with fine buildings; but they scarcely correspond with the usual ideas of a *place*. The most beautiful of these is that which divides the Winter Palace, &c. from the Nefskoï quarter. It is adorned with what we

do not hesitate to pronounce the finest monument in the world.

In no part of Europe have we seen any thing worthy of being compared with the remarkable pillar lately erected here, in honour of the Emperor Alexander. If we admire Napoleon's column in Paris, or the Melville column in Edinburgh, composed of separate stones put together in the usual way, what shall we say of this stupendous work, which consists of only *one* stone, and yet is considerably larger than those monuments? its height, if we are correctly informed, including the figure on the top, being exactly 154 feet, and its diameter 15 feet.* It is a round column, of mottled red granite, from the quarries of Pytterlax, in Finland, 140 miles from St. Petersburg. The stone is very like the beautiful granite of Peterhead, in Scotland, but darker, and susceptible of even a higher polish.

We have never seen any thing that attracted us so much. It is the perfection of monumental architecture. There is no frippery; there is something sublime in its simplicity. It is impossible to gaze on it without emotion. You never

* In some accounts, the height is given as only 150 feet. The Paris column is 140 feet high; the Edinburgh one is 136 feet 4 inches high, or, including the figure, 152 feet, with a diameter of 12 feet 2 inches at the base, and 10 feet 6 inches at top; while Trajan's column at Rome, on which it is modelled, is 113 feet 9 inches high. Antonine's column was 172½ feet in height, and 12 feet 3 inches in diameter. The Monument in London is the highest of all, being 202 feet from the pavement; the diameter is 15 feet.

think of asking to whom it is raised; it has an interest quite distinct from any association with him whose memory it honours. You view it merely as a triumph of human power, which could tear such a mass from the reluctant rock, transport it so great a distance, and, under so many difficulties, carve, and mould, and polish it into one smooth shaft, then poise the huge weight as lightly as a feather, and plant it here, to be the admiration of ages.

This pillar is founded on massive blocks of granite, and has a pedestal and capital of bronze, made from the cannon taken in the recent wars with the Turks. It is the *largest stone ever cut, either in ancient or modern times.* The shaft alone is eighty-four feet high. On its top stands a bronze statue of Religion, in the act of blessing the surrounding city. The head of this figure stoops so ungracefully below the higher part of the half-expanded wings, that, in some positions, it looks a headless trunk. The usual practice of placing on the top the statue of the hero to whom the monument is dedicated, has been here departed from, out of deference to a word uttered by Alexander, when passing the column of the Place Vendôme, before the now-restored statue of Napoleon had been removed from its giddy eminence. "God forbid," said he, "that ever *I* should occupy such a post! There is something of profanity in thus exalting any human being, to be worshipped, as it were, by his fellow-creatures."

This unrivalled monument is a remarkable proof

of the bold and original taste of the present emperor: for the idea of it began solely with him. But if it excite our admiration so strongly, even as it now is, what would have been thought of it had it been raised here of the full height in which it was cut from the quarry? The history is enough to drive one mad; and it did very nearly drive the emperor that length. Orders had been given to the director of the quarries, to try and extract one solid mass, fit to be hewn into a column of a certain length. The operation was begun with slight hopes of success. It was deemed impossible ever to obtain *one* stone of such a size. Ministers, generals, princes, the whole court, were in anxiety about what the mountain should bring forth; when, at last,—who shall describe their joy?—a courier arrives with the happy tidings, that, for once, the labours of the mountain had not ended in disappointment. Expectation was even surpassed; for, in place of eighty-four feet, a mass had been separated nearly one hundred feet long. There were no bounds to the delight inspired by the news. St. Petersburg would now boast of a monument that might challenge the world. But, alas! there was a postscript to this famous letter. The director had been ordered to get a stone eighty-four feet long; and as in Russia they are not in the habit of giving a man much credit for departing from the very letter of an imperial mandate—and it being a bad precedent to allow any functionary to think for himself—the zealous man of

stones added, that he was now *busy sawing away the superfluous fourteen feet.* Here was a pleasant piece of implicit obedience! The emperor was in despair; but as it is not his custom to commission others to do things which may be better done by himself, he posted away immediately, in hopes of still saving his unexpected treasure; and, as good luck would have it, arrived just in time—to see the fair fragment tumble off.

The expense of this monument was very great. To say nothing of the cost of transport, one hundred men laboured on it for some years after its arrival. Not the least expensive part was the raising of it, when finished, into its present position. As a specimen of the great skill which the Russians have acquired in applying mechanical powers, it is worth mentioning that it was swung into its place in the short space of fifty-four minutes. The whole population of the capital were present (August, 1832) to see the ceremony. M. de Montferrand, the architect, is a native of France, but must have had some lessons in mechanics from his adopted countrymen; for in Paris, the other day, they took several hours to raise the poor little obelisk of Luxor, which would not make a little finger to this Russian giant.

In honouring his predecessor with a monument of this description, the emperor may have been prompted by a wish to excel the boasted feat of the empress Catherine, who selected for the base of

the *Equestrian Statue of Peter the Great*, a large mass of grayish rock, lying in the middle of marshes, at such a distance from St. Petersburg, that every one believed it impossible to transport it thither. In its native bed it was sunk fifteen feet in the ground; on being raised from which, before reaching the sea, it had a journey of nearly six miles to make, by a road ingeniously constructed for the occasion; after which it had a voyage of eight miles to the spot which it now occupies. Two small pieces are joined to the largest block, which weighs upwards of fifteen hundred tons. It is a rough irregular mass, forty-three feet long, twenty-one broad, and thirteen high in front, from which it slopes gradually backwards. The inscription is beautifully simple: *Petro primo Catharina secunda*, 1782. Peter is seen riding gallantly up this rock, in the ancient costume of Muscovy,—which, with a short mantle flowing from his shoulders, has a very classical effect. He is without stirrups, and is so busy getting his steed to trample on the hydra of rebellion writhing beneath his feet, that he does not perceive the brink of the precipice till he is about to be plunged over it. Ever calm and fearless in peril, he checks his horse as if by a wish, and pauses with the greatest self-possession, to beckon into existence the proud city which was to bear his name. The effect of the whole monument is certainly good; but the marvels of the *rock* it stands upon have been too much trumpeted: one is disappointed to find that it is

merely a good-sized block, scarcely higher than the pedestal of our own Charles at Charing-cross. It is said to have sunk considerably of late.

Men are always most eager about what is most difficult to be obtained. The Russians have a passion for these mountains of granite, probably because there is not a stone bigger than a molehill within sight of their capital. If common materials could be procured at little expense, they would *build* monuments like other people; but since stones may not be had for thousands, they must transport whole rocks at the expense of tens of thousands. In Norway and Sweden, which are strewed as thick with rocks as other countries are with furze-bushes, they build every thing of wood.

A foreigner is more struck by the strength and durability of the two monuments now described, on looking at the crumbling plaster-work of the city in which they stand. Could we suppose St. Petersburg deserted by its inhabitants, and left without a repairing hand only for a single century, how much of it would remain standing? The handful of bronze and adamant of its founder's monument, Alexander's column, the granite embankments of the Neva, and a few pillars in some of the churches, rearing their heads among indistinguishable heaps of decay, would probably be all that would survive to tell that here *was* a city.

The churches, though not in general composed of such imperishable materials as the monuments just

mentioned, are well worthy of notice. They are so numerous, however, that any other than a mere allusion, and that only to a few of them, would be impossible in a work of this nature. If the *taste* displayed in them be often questionable, their *splendour* none will deny. The first entrance of a foreigner into a Russian church is a moment of complete surprise. As soon as the threshold is crossed, the vast space enclosed by lofty roof and long aisle is one blaze of light, which is thrown back with new lustre from the pure marble below. There is nothing to break the fine proportion of the architecture—neither chair nor bench of any kind. The eye wanders in rapture, from pavement to keystone, without a single object to mar the effect, except perhaps some lonely worshipper kneeling by the foot of a pillar, which only appears larger from having something to measure it by. In fine, the cleanness, the glitter, the lavishness of ornament, are beyond all that can be seen in other northern countries. Almost every one of the principal temples here must have cost more than all the churches of Berlin put together.

Externally, the style is more oriental than European. The great number of domes and cupolas on these vast structures would qualify them for being at once turned into Turkish mosques. Millions must have been expended on the *outside* gilding of the domes of St. Petersburg. 2814 gold ducats were spread over the iron of a single spire—that of the

cathedral of the fortress; and others are said to have cost still more. Some of the domes, instead of being wholly gilt, are painted deep blue, with large stars spangled over them, shining with beautiful effect in the sun. The severity of the climate, however, soon injures the external ornaments, and puts gold-leaf and tin, as well as paint and lime, in frequent request. Indeed, every building in the city is constantly needing repair. We found many of the theatres and museums, as well as the churches, shut up because the workmen were in them. This is owing to the frailty of the materials employed. Most of the public buildings, as well as the new houses, are put down in the statistical returns as built of *stone;* but this often means *brick covered with stucco*, which is hourly peeling off. The great palaces, which look so imposing, are as flimsy as all the rest of the city.

But while the outside of the churches is thus unsubstantial, their interior is generally adorned in the most solid manner. Granite columns, polished to the highest degree, rise glittering from marbled pavements, of every varied colour that the quarry has produced. Where the wall is not coated with marble, expensive gilding takes its place; and often large portions of scripture are written in the intervals. In some instances, the whole of one of the gospels is thus painted on the wall, in large and beautiful letters.

The way in which the internal columns and aisles of churches are sometimes adorned, is singular

enough. In one are grouped the trophies earned in the wars with the Turks, from the capture of Ismail to the fall of Varna. Here banners and horsetails festoon the walls, intermixed with the keys of important fortresses, scimitars, and oriental armour; while, bright through all, gleams the humbled crescent. In other churches hang banners taken from the Austrians, Prussians, and French; among which last, the mace of a marshal of the empire—of Ney, we believe—is carefully displayed.

Every church contains some pictures. *Outside* even—but this is more the case in country places—large groups of figures, mere daubs, may be seen on the plaster above the portico. Of the pictures *within*, among all the churches we examined in St. Petersburg, there is hardly one of any merit. The only performances of this kind which are at all tolerable, so far as our experience goes, are some copies from Reubens, Guido, and Perugino. The most revered pictures, generally of the Saviour, the Virgin, or some saint, are always placed not far from the door—sometimes on a table, sometimes on the wall—framed in a most vulgar, gaudy fashion; a character which belongs to too much of what is seen among the ornaments of Russian churches. The drapery on these pictures is formed by a thin sheet of gold and silver tinsel, leaving nothing exposed of the original picture but the face, which thus has a most ludicrous effect; looking like a child peeping through a hole in a piece of tin. The veneration in which they are held by the people, however, is extreme. The toe of the black

statue of St. Peter at Rome, well burnished though it be with the kisses of the faithful, is not saluted with half the fervour displayed by the Russians in this picture-worship. If the surface of the painting were left exposed, every trace of it would soon be kissed away. Each person on entering presses his lips as close to the face as the tinsel and frame will allow; then, kneeling, and making the sign of the cross, utters some vow or ejaculation, before advancing to the place where the officiating priests are stationed,—which is usually at the *side*, not the *end* of an aisle.*

The cathedral which would best merit a full description, is that of St. Isaac, the protector of the empire. As yet, however, it is only in progress toward splendour. When completed, it is expected to rival St. Peter's at Rome. The sums already expended on it are enormous. In every successive reign, since 1768, something has been done to it; but the foundations having been at first insecure, the work of each emperor has been more to repair the blunders of his predecessor, than to add to the splendour of the structure. Wearied of this endless waste, the present emperor has very wisely thrown down nearly all that was done before him, and is now raising it on a plan of great magnificence and solidity. If spared so long, he is determined to complete in ten years what had baffled all his predecessors; and, for this purpose, he has decreed that so much

* See chap. xi. of this volume, and chap. viii. of the second.

shall be expended on it every year. What renders this structure so expensive is, that while other buildings have but one front, this has four; its form being a perfect square. The walls are of beautiful white marble; each peristyle is formed of twelve columns of polished red granite, each of one solid stone, sixty feet in height, and seven in diameter. According to the fashion which seems so common here, every pillar rests on a socket of bronze, and terminates in a Corinthian capital of the same. High above these, where the dome springs, is a circle of similar columns, also of large proportions. The operation of transporting these huge stones from the river across the square, is a very curious sight; the beams on which they are rolled, are bruised to threads by the weight. Nothing but marble, or the equally expensive granite brought from Finland, are to be employed in this immense building. The whiteness of the marble on the walls throws out the dark columns beautifully. The architect is a Frenchman, the same who was intrusted with Alexander's pillar. He has five thousand labourers engaged on this great task. The scaffolding is of strength sufficient to make one believe it is intended to be as durable as the building itself.

The same solidity is visible in the preparations connected with all the public works here. The framework employed in swinging Alexander's pillar into its place, is said to have been *ten times too strong* — an error on the right side. This

peculiarity is worth mentioning, as a proof that the Russians are not so careless of human life as has been represented.

There are many churches of great beauty, but we can do little more than name them. That called *Alexandronefskaïa svaitotroitzkaïa lavra*, or Convent of St. Alexander Nefskoï, situated at the end of the Perspective of the same name, nearly three miles from the Admiralty, contains the tombs of some princes of the royal family, those of many eminent generals or statesmen, and especially that of the saint, who has a sarcophagus consisting of 3250 pounds weight of silver.

The *Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul*, the oldest place of worship in the capital, protects the remains of nearly all the emperors and empresses, since the time of Peter, who himself sleeps here, with Tzars, Tzarinas, Tzarevitches (*sons* of Tzars), and Tzarovnas (*daughters* of Tzars), in long and pompous array beside him.

The *Cathedral of our Lady of Kasan*, would also merit a long description. Its dome bears some resemblance to that of the Pantheon at Rome, and the noble converging sweep of 132 pillars, forming the arcade in front, is imitated from the colonnade of St. Peter's. The interior is adorned with fifty-four beautiful pillars of grayish granite, each but a single stone, the shaft resting on finely-wrought pedestals of bronze, and terminating in wreathed summits of the same rich material. The picture of the Virgin here displayed is looked on with such

reverence, that pearls and jewels to the value of 100,000 roubles (4000*l.*) have been employed to adorn it. Generals departing on distant campaigns come here in solemn procession, at which the whole court and capital attend, to kiss the sacred image, and to invoke its blessing on their enterprise.

The churches of our *Lady of Vladimir*, *St. Nicolas*, and that of the *Raskolniks*, &c., the church of the Armenians (of whom there is a numerous body), and the temple of the French Catholics in the Nefskoï, where the remains of Moreau, transported from the fatal heights of Dresden, find the repose which his country denied him—are among the more remarkable of the many religious edifices which we must leave undescribed. There are in all 140 churches of the establishment, besides the two large convents and their chapels. The foreign churches are also numerous, and include 9 Lutheran, 3 Calvinist, and 2 Roman Catholic places of worship.

Among the public edifices of a general nature, those which would most merit description are the *Exchange*, the *Academy of Fine Arts*, the *Mining College (Gornoï Korpous)*, the *Admiralty*, the *Foundling*, the Poor's Hospital, City Infirmary, the Institutions for the *Deaf and Dumb*, the *Blind*, &c., the Imperial Library, the new *Alexander Theatre* near it, the *Grand Theatre*, &c.; but all of these, as well as *Souvaroff's Statue*, near the Champ de Mars, and *Roumantsoff's* modest pillar on the square

of the Vassilii-ostroff, we must leave undescribed, with the frank confession that we have no hope of inducing the reader to accompany us through all the curiosities of a city which, with its suburbs and islands, covers a wearisome circle 22 English miles (33½ versts) in circumference.

Nor has St. Pertersburg yet reached its full growth: the statistical tables, collected by the indefatigable Schnitzler, prove that it is rapidly increasing in size and population. In 1762 there were only 4554 houses, of which not more than 460 were of stone, whereas in 1832 there were 8157, of which 2915 were of stone. It will give a more clear idea of its progress, however, to state the amount of population at three different periods.* In the year 1750 it contained only 74,273 souls, but in 1828 the population had reached 422,165, while in 1832 it was given at 449,343. The following list will show how the population is composed:

Clergy		2,188
Nobility		34,079
Non-commissioned officers and soldiers		39,487
Merchants	Nobles	25
	Domiciled in St. Petersburg	8,506
	——— in other towns	2,297
	Foreign merchants	30
Artisans, inscribed in the different crafts		4,617
——— temporary	Russians	21,526
	Foreigners	1,136
	Carried forward	113,841

* The statements in this and the two following pages are given on the authority of official documents quoted in SCHNITZLER'S *La Russie, la Pologne, et la Finlande*, Paris and St. Petersburg, 1835, 1 vol. 8vo.—A work of immense value to all who wish to become acquainted with the statistics of Russia.

	Brought forward	113,841
Citizens	Domiciled at St. Petersburg	24,653
	Belonging to other places ...	12,072
Raznotchintsi (people of various professions).....		66,366
Foreigners, not merchants.....		7,199
Servants of the nobility		94,009
Peasants (shopkeepers, hawkers, hackney-coachmen, &c.).....		127,865
Inhabitants of the village of Okhta		3,338
		449,343

To give an idea of the arrivals and departures from the capital it may he stated, that in the same year 37,222 Russians *entered* it, while 3695 *left* it: of foreigners 5027 arrived, and 9697 left.

A knowledge of the *commerce* of the Russian capital is of such importance to all who would form any correct opinion of the wants and resources of the empire, that no apology is necessary for inserting the following tables, showing the imports and exports in the years 1831 and 1832. Ship-captains say of St. Petersburg, that it is the most *liberal port in the world*, there being no charges on *ships* in any shape whatever, beyond the dues on their cargoes. It may be premised that the capital enjoys precisely one-half of the whole foreign trade of Russia, leaving only an eighth to Riga, and a twelfth to Odessa. Of the trade of Russia in general, it also deserves to be mentioned that it is in the most flourishing state. Archangel, which was long the only seaport of the empire, now makes but a poor figure beside its younger rivals; yet even its trade is still of great importance, and is rising higher every year; the exports, which in 1829

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amounted to 562,000*l.*, having in 1831 reached 590,057*l.*; since which they have been gradually advancing in a still greater proportion.

IMPORTS OF ST. PETERSBURG.

	1831. Roubles.	1832. Roubles.
Gold and silver		16,000,000
Spun cotton (twist and yarn)	32,160,700	40,000,000
Cotton goods	3,609,612	3,400,000
Woollens	6,261,794	8,000,000
Linen goods	364,883	500,000
Silks	3,6 7,188	5,700,000
Coffee	2.507,814	4,500,000
Raw sugar	20,290,639	25,500,000
Wines	8,335,269	7,000,000
Liqueurs		863,000
Medical drugs		1,400,000
Tobacco	1,965,917	
Fruits	1,813,698	
Cheese	862,609	

EXPORTS.

	1831. Roubles.	1832. Roubles.
Grain	12,956,600	5,000,000
Iron	3,892,330	7,500,000
Copper		5,500,000
Hemp	2,377,544	15,000,000
Flax	2,520,926	4,000,000
Linseed oil	1,249,146	
Timber articles	2,377,544	
Tallow	35,181,270	37,650,000
Linen stuffs	6,215,175	6,800,000
Towelling	290,000	
Tobacco	331,000	
Dressed hides	138,218	
Iouftes and raw hides	3,453,637	3,610,000
Cordage		1,000,000
Potash		2,500,000

As Schnitzler's phrase, "*marchandises en bois*," is not very intelligible, it may be more instructive to state, that the wood exported from all parts of Russia in 1833, was valued at *seven* millions of roubles, and the quantity for 1835, at *nine* millions. The fur trade is of great importance to Russia: the total exports in 1834 were valued at 168,378*l.*, of which 55,357*l.* were to England alone. In 1827, furs to the value of 493,440*l.* were sold to the different countries of Europe.

To show what progress Russia is making in manufactures, it may be stated, that there are no fewer than one-hundred and eighty-seven manufactories of various kinds in or near the capital. Many of these are worthy of especial notice, but we can mention only the celebrated and interesting Alexandrofsky Zavod, which stands about six miles from the city. This is one of the largest manufacturing establishments to be met with on the continent, there being about 3000 free labourers employed in it, and 1000 boys and girls from the Foundling Hospital. There is also a house of convalescence for patients from the Foundling, and a hospital for the sick of the place. Cotton, linen, table-cloths, quilts, sail-cloth, and playing-cards, are here manufactured on a very extensive scale; the men being employed in the hemp and flax departments, and the children on the cotton and linen. There is also a very extensive fabric of weaving and spinning machinery, steam-engines, &c.; but we were given to understand that (as we

have usually found regarding such establishments abroad) the emperor can procure steam-engines, and all kinds of machinery, much cheaper from England, than he can make them at home. The superintendents are from England; and the whole of the works are under the management of a gentleman of the name of Wilson, who, according to the Russian fashion of giving military titles to those who never wielded any weapon more bloody than the pen or the pestle, enjoys the rank of General, and is honoured with much regard by the government.

Though comparatively little has been doing in them of late years, a visit to the Porcelain Works will also reward the stranger. We have seen some vases which were made here, as large and as beautiful as any of the famous Dresden manufactory. The painting, in particular, is most exquisitely finished.

The Glass Works of St. Petersburg have long been celebrated. Some of the largest mirrors in Europe have been made here, and the labours are still carried on with great spirit.

CHAPTER IX.

SCENES AMONG THE PEOPLE—BEARDS, DRESS, AND MANNERS.

Singular appearance of the Russian crowd—Unlike every other European nation—Oriental character—Plainness of the women—Small-pox—The men—Intermarriages with Germans, &c.—Long beards esteemed by the people—Want of cleanliness—Washing process—Sheep-skins—Clean shirts—General costume—Not always suited to the climate—Inconsistency of the Russians—Heated rooms—Cold—Sobriety—Drunkenness in the streets—The Russian peasant contrasted with the Frenchman—The Englishman—The dram-shop—Natural gaiety.

LEAVING dead monuments and dry statistics, let us glance at the more interesting—the *living* sights around.

Most of the streets are silent and deserted; scarce a creature is to be seen. The houses are known to be occupied, else we should say that the city is much too large for its population. On the bridge, however, and in the principal thoroughfares near it, there is a constant and highly interesting crowd. The appearance of the people is most strange—different from that of all other nations. In the other countries of Europe, a traveller, passing from state to state, can

note the differences between the two: here it is unnecessary to do so, further than by the brief sentence, "*every thing* is different." Dress, features, manners, pursuits—all are new. The Swedes, the Norwegians, the Danes, are like some of the other nations of the continent; but the Russian is *unique*—alone among the tribes of men. He is neither Asiatic nor European—partly of the one, perhaps, and partly of the other, but he partakes of the character of neither so strongly as to entitle us to pronounce decidedly on his parentage. Let his origin have been what it may, he now stands apart from all. The only comparison that can be made about him is, to say that he is like —a Russian.

The first impression, however, of a stranger in a Russian crowd is, that he must be in some city of Asia,—so truly oriental is the air of many: but the strength and freshness of every structure around soon recall him from dreams of the decaying east. At another time the long beards, and flowing robes, and coloured girdles, make them look a population of Jews; but their hair and eye want the deep dark hue of the tribe of Israel.

The great mass of the people wear the coarse sheepskin dress already mentioned; and, filthy and rude as it is, it sets off their good forms to advantage; for, however bad their features may be, they are a tall, well-built race as to figure. The *men* at least are so: of the *women* few are gifted with handsomeness, either of face or person. There is no country

in Europe where the females of the lower classes are so universally forbidding—their features and forms being equally bad. If you meet a person at all wo th looking at, she is sure to be a German, or perhaps a Swede. Heavy wrinkled cheeks, and short blunt noses, are the prevailing style of beauty. The gait, too, is exceedingly ungraceful, their step being as short and uneasy as that of a stumping Chinese damsel. In fact, among Russian women of the middle and lower class, we did not see a single face that would be dangerous to an Englishman. Their pernicious baths, and early marriages, have been blamed for this dearth of female charms; but they also suffer greatly from another ravager of beauty, long deemed incapable of control—smallpox. Nowhere have we seen so many marked with the traces of this sad malady. Whether it be from ignorance or from some religious scruple, we know not; but they have always shown themselves averse to vaccination: out of 9779 infants born here in 1828, only 543 were vaccinated!

Nor is it the females alone that are chargeable with the grievous offence of plain looks; fine features are equally rare among the men. The imperial family are the only really good-looking people in Russia. Both the emperor and his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, have faces that would pass for handsome any where; but they are more Germans than Russians. The true Russian may be known in any part of the world, by his small light eyes; a certain lowness of the nose, the end of which is thrust back so as to

show the nostril too much; and especially by the general flatness of the cheek, and total want of expression in the countenance. A more unmeaning face, even when there is any thing like handsomeness, cannot be met with.

Should the reader ever happen to see a good-looking Russian, an exception to the tempting standard now given, he may safely set him down as of the higher ranks—in fact, not a pure Russ, of whom alone we are now speaking:—for many of the best families have intermarried with those of Livonia or Courland—countries famed for the beauty and amiability of their women. Russian officers always look well, whether taken individually or together; but all of them belong to the class now named, and have the further advantage of being well dressed: unlike some of the German ones, the Russian uniforms set off a good figure and improve a bad one.

Of Circassian blood there is little among the Russians. We have heard Germans speak of some of that graceful tribe, as adorning the gay societies of St. Petersburg; but it must have been in dreams that they were seen. The maids of Daghestan still bloom among their native rocks, in spite of Russian power and Russian gold. The Russians call themselves masters of Circassia and its mountains, but they have never been able to win the affections of even the meanest of the people. Though the traffic in beauty be now strictly prohibited by treaties, a Circassian mother, even at every risk, would *sell* her child to a

Turkish soldier, rather than *marry* her to a Muscovite count.

Historians say so much about Peter's firmness in extirpating the long beards in which his people delighted,—with his own imperial hand cutting off, not the beards merely, but the heads of the refractory,—that we expected to find the chins of the Russians as naked as those of barbers' blocks. But there are national prejudices too strong even for the most unshrinking reformers. The Russian loves his beard with no common love, and there it still flows in ample waves to his girdle, defying alike the beheading-sword and the razor. The peasant would sooner part with his purse than his beard; it is his pride, his birthright. Better abandon children and home to wander into forlorn exile, than give up the only thing left him to glory in. Liberty is not worth contending for, but a beard is. Liberty is but a *word*, an untangible fanciful thing, which no man ever saw or could make money of; a beard is a reality; something which a man can not only see, but handle also. And if he cannot exactly make money by a beard, it gains him that which is better than gold, for he knows that no true Russian maid would look at him, if shorn of this beauteous appendage. Without his beard he would neither have affection from others, nor respect from himself. A beard is graceful, imposing, venerable—in one word, it is *Russian*.

The usage still continues, therefore, let the emperor thunder against it as he may. He can shear

his soldiers, his sailors, his ministers, his nobles, his foreigners, his brothers, his princes—for these live by his breath, and must do as he bids them. But his subjects—those who support *him*, and supply him with the means of paying all these creatures of his will,—every man that is obscure enough to be independent,—persists in displaying this, the only badge he has to show that he is still a Muscovite. Even the clergy refuse to be cropped; they are the most obstinate of all the hairy flock. The government is right to let the matter rest. Violent changes in manners—the *compelled* adoption of any prescribed reform—have never done good in any country. Cutting off his beard does not make a civilized man of a savage. Let them humanise the people by indulgent laws and good institutions, and the beards, if they be such an evil, will disappear of themselves.

Whether the long beard be consistent with cleanliness, is a question soon settled in the streets of St. Petersburg. Nothing can be more filthy than the appearance of the people; and it strikes one the more, immediately after leaving the Swedes, Norwegians, or Danes, who are all very cleanly. The nature of their dress powerfully contributes to the disgusting appearance of the native population. Greasy sheepskins cannot be great promoters of cleanliness. It is a notorious fact also, that the great bulk of the people never allow water to touch the person, except once a week—on Saturday evening, when their religion prescribes a visit to the bath, where they get such a

thorough ablution (see chap. xv. *on Baths*), as entitles them to eight days of filthiness. The Russian takes his clean shirt with him on this occasion, and it never leaves his back till Saturday comes round again; for among the lower classes it is not customary to put off *any* part of their dress, even at night; nearly all of them sleep in their clothes.

To wash the *face* on ordinary week-days is a folly unknown; the *hands* may, by a few, be occasionally polluted with water. In the country a small jar of this scarce liquid may be seen hanging by some of the doors, for washing with; at least a thimbleful being allowed, oozing from below, to each person. At some inns and eating-houses also, a metal cistern, of the smallest dimensions, hangs by the entrance; from which, on pushing up the pin stuck in the bottom, a few *drops* of water trickle, to smear the hands with, before going to dinner. But the practice is scarcely associated in our minds with any idea of cleanliness; the towel hanging near having already been used by every comer for a week past, and being often as black as if it had been scouring the saucepans.

Instead of the woolly skin, a short frock of red-striped cotton, made much in the same shape, is often worn by shop-lads, errand-boys, butchers' apprentices, &c. Like every dress the Russians wear, it sets off the figure to advantage. But the most common dress of all who have not the axe or the oar in their hand, is the long blue swaddling-

coat. Droschky-men, and a great part of the people met with in the streets, are dressed in it. There is a long sash round the middle, generally yellow or red. They seldom wear any thing about the neck; the collar of the coat being very low, and the shirt made without a neck, like that of a woman. The head projects above a long tract of skin, which, from constant exposure to sun and wind, looks as horny as the rhinoceros's hide. We shave our chins; the Russian shaves the *back* of the head. His idea of handsome looks appearing to consist in having his head raised as distinct as possible from the body, he shaves away a large portion of the hair at the top of the neck, and cuts the remainder so as to make the head resemble a turnip, as near as may be. He generally wears a small low-crowned hat, with a broad brim.

If the Russian's dress be scanty above, it is long enough below. It reaches to the ground, and laps closely over the limbs, so that he has a long waving appearance, as he moves through the streets with solemn pace. Instead of *blue* cloth, the variegated cotton velvet,—one of the most beautiful products of the Russian loom, as yet little known in England,—is sometimes employed to make the flowing robe; but on those who come into the streets with it, this article, worn also by the rich for morning-gowns, is always shining with grease.

The dress *below* the coat is often very slight. They wear no flannel; the only protection to the

limbs is a thin rag of striped cotton, made into breeches, which are thrust into the long black boots that complete the costume.

A stranger would say that one half the people must be starving with cold even in summer, so thin and slight are their garments. Yet there is a singular contradiction in the dress of the other half of the street crowd. Even in the warmest days, when we were scarcely able to walk for the heat, we saw Russians wrapped up as if for winter. While foreigners are glad to fan themselves with their hats, the natives may be seen with huge fur cloaks about them, thick great-coats below, and other articles sufficient to load a giant. This custom arises from the variableness of their climate, of which we ourselves saw some examples. When we first arrived the days were as hot as we ever felt; but before long the weather was as cold and rainy as in November at home. Even in the course of the *same day*, there are great variations of temperature. At noon it is burning, but ere night almost freezing. Nay, some assert that, out of the sun, it is *always* cold at St. Petersburg. The damps of the river, or the breezes sweeping from Lake Ladoga, penetrate every where. On the sunny side of the street you are comfortable, perhaps melting; but pass to the shade, and you shiver. Such at least was the reason given us by a German, who had been ten years in Russia, for asserting that of all seasons in the year,

summer is the one when people here must be most guarded about their dress.

How the Russian should be able to stand either summer or winter cold, was to us most surprising, when we became acquainted with the state in which they keep their rooms. On entering the house of a tradesman, for instance, it is scarcely possible to breathe, so great is the heat. The smell, too, not a breath of air being admitted, is frightful. Yet here they smother themselves winter and summer, never making the least change in the temperature. We cannot suppose it possible for human beings to endure a higher degree of heat. The Russians, in fact, are full of contradictions. In speaking of them, you at one time say that they are so hardy as to go very thinly clad; and then, immediately after, you are forced to bring in that they are so effeminate that people of other countries can neither carry their loads of summer furs, nor endure the stifling vapours of their summer stoves. Their frames must be differently constituted from ours: they can encounter the most opposite excesses, and the most sudden transitions, without the slightest inconvenience. They load themselves with furs, yet can sleep on the stones without cloak or covering. From rooms where an Englishman would expire with the suffocating warmth, they rush to tumble upon the ice of the Neva. From a bath, heated to an almost insupportable extreme, they plunge themselves among snow.

Nor is it merely in regard to heat and cold that this inconsistency is exhibited; it is visible in all they do. They are naturally sober and self-denying; can live long without indulging in excess; are most industrious when it is in their power to gain a little, and anxious to store up something against the evil day. Yet, put liquor in their way—let temptation come across the path—and that instant, farewell sobriety, industry, saving habits! all are forgotten as much as if they had never been known. They are consistent in nothing but their contradictions.

The propensity last mentioned is the worst part of the Russian character. Nothing is more common in the quiet streets (for the sight is seldom witnessed in the more crowded parts) than to meet a pair of blue-coated gentlemen, reeling home in most helpless intoxication. They neither see nor hear you. If they run against the passenger, they think it is the wall that they have struck, and shoulder on without moving eye or lip. They are generally arm in arm, trying to *help* each other—but the effort cannot be continued much longer—they are evidently getting more oblivious. There is neither oath nor angry word betwixt them; they are reeling on in perfect silence and brotherly love. They have still some sense of shame left, and are anxious to get home

out of sight: they raise their feet to make longer steps—but it will not do; the foot falls where it rose from; the head is getting giddier, the street wider, the limb feebler, till down they fall in the nearest gutter, snoring in most complete insensibility. A melancholy, but a too frequent sight! If the emperor could eradicate this debasing propensity, he would do more for his people than if he should overrun Asia.

There is something remarkable, too, in the Russian's way of getting drunk. Even in his vices he is unlike other people. Some nations drink for amusement—the Russians drink to get drunk. A Frenchman spends his long holiday at the *barrière*, over a *demi-litre*, and, even if he make it a whole one, walks home very decently at night. He went there to talk, *pour se désennuyer*, to see his friends, or dance a round with his sweetheart. The *wine* was a mere secondary consideration; a mean, not the end of his amusement. The Englishman goes to the tavern to hear the paper read, to abuse the ministry, and smoke his pipe: he may come away merry, but would be ashamed to hear afterwards that he came away drunk. It was not for the liquor, but for the company and the talk he went thither. Even when a Frenchman or an Englishman does get intoxicated, he has spent hours in

reaching that state; but with a Russian it is quite otherwise—he gets drunk *in a moment.* He enters a brandy-shop, beckons to the master, counts down his kopeeks, seizes the measure, and, at one draught, quaffs enough to make him a beast.

Some nations seek to justify their drinking by the pretext that they do so to make themselves merry—their phlegmatic blood will not move without a stimulant. The Russian drinks to make himself sad. He needs no stimulus to put him into spirits; he is by nature the merriest soul alive. Frolicsome as a young colt, he may be seen, when two or three have got together on the quays, or on the greensward round the fortress, flinging his heels as high as the trees, playing all manner of fantastic tricks with his companions, and keeping the ring in laughter with his jokes. But the moment this happy creature has swallowed the poisonous dose, he becomes heavy, flat, and powerless. Mirth and strength alike are gone. He must be cared for by the police, or tied in the droschky among his mates.

CHAPTER X.

LOUNGE IN THE FASHIONABLE NEFSKOI—RUSSIAN EQUIPAGES—FOREIGN POPULATION.

Scenes among the lone streets and silent canals—Policemen—The gay quarters—The Nefskoï Prospekht—New kind of pavement—Crowds and carriages—Equipages of the Nobility—Russian idea of horses—Bad steeds—Long traces—Bearded coachman—Young postilion—Three-horse droschkies—Foreign quarter—French—Swedes—Italians—English—Few soldiers seen in the crowds—Profusion of medals.

We have said that the scenes described in the last chapter are to be seen only in the quiet streets; and it should be stated that the great majority of the streets are of this character. The moment you leave the bridge and its neighbourhood, or the Nefskoï Prospekht, and one or two of its tributaries, all the avenues are as quiet as the glades of a forest. Now and then a stray droschky may be seen, but generally in most of the streets there is room to manœuvre a brigade without disturbing a creature.

The *canals* are also very lonely and silent. These are in the mainland portion of the capital, and lie one behind the other, forming irregular semicircles, from one point of the Neva to another. There are several of them, such as—beginning with the one farthest back—the *Exterior* and *Lingofskii*, the Fontanka, *Catherine's Canal*, and the *Moika*; but they do not stand so near each other as to form very conspicuous objects in the general aspect of the capital. Some of them are covered with fuel-barges and washing-boats. Their masonry, parapets, &c. are very handsome; and the footpath across some of the more frequented canals is laid with rough iron. On some of these bridges, as well as on those of the Neva, a solitary policeman is stationed in a small house, where one watches night and day—quiet creatures the whole tribe of them are, in whitish coats and dark trousers, peeping out at their door, with harmless Lochaber axes in their hands. Having a good eye, and being always on the alert to notice who passes, they are said to be of great use in detecting thieves. Few policemen of any other kind are seen even in the Nefskoï, where the crowd is greatest.

The gay place just named is the boast of the Russian capital. Indeed, the Nefskoï Prospekht is one of the finest streets we have ever seen. In

many respects it surpasses the Corso at Milan, and in some it almost approaches even the Linden-drive at Berlin, which combines so many attractions, that it is perhaps the most beautiful street in Europe. The Nefskoï commences at the square adjoining the Admiralty and the Palace, and runs backwards through the city in a straight line, nearly three English miles long, with lofty, handsome houses on each side, and occasionally rows of trees by the footpath. Along it stand some of the finest buildings of the city—such as the Cathedral of our Lady of Kasan, and the Imperial Library; some of the theatres and minor palaces may also be reckoned among its splendours, as well as the *Gostinnoi Dvor*, or Bazaar, &c. The gilded spire of the Admiralty forms a conspicuous termination both to this and some other great lines, which radiate from the same point as a centre.

In width and regularity the Nefskoï resembles all the other streets, but not in dulness and monotony. Its broad foot-pavements are incessantly covered with gay parties passing from shop to shop; and the centre, at certain hours, is literally crowded with the showy, but tasteless, equipages of the nobility; for it is both the Hyde Park and the Regent-street of St. Petersburg.

The carriage-path is of a kind, of which, except the specimen of it recently exhibited in one of the

great thoroughfares in London, we have seen no example in any other European city. It consists of what is now known by the name of block-pavement; to form which, little hexagonal blocks of wood, eight inches thick perhaps, and as many wide, cut across the grain, are imbedded in sand and pitch, and made to fit so closely together, that nothing can be more even than the surface they form. There is no driving in the world half so delightful as to roll along this wooden road, in a well-hung carriage, drawn by good horses. The noise of the wheels is as soft and agreeable as the motion, which is quite different from that on any other kind of road. Dr. Johnson's idea of the *summum bonum* would have been heightened tenfold, had he been whirled in a postchaise on such a road as this. Here and there a block has started or sunk, but the inequalities are scarcely perceptible, and soon repaired when they come to be so. This pavement was laid down partly as an experiment; and it has answered expectations completely as to comfort and look; but the expense is found to be very great, from the effects of frosts and wet in disturbing the pieces, and rendering frequent repairs necessary. It has been said that the emperor wishes to have every street in the capital paved in this way, but we can see no sufficient reason for deranging the present good pavements of the old-fashioned kind.

The equipages seen in this seductive quarter are most singular, and, to an English taste, most amusing. We do not speak of the active little droschkies, gliding along in thousands at every hour of the day, but of the great lumbering equipages of the higher classes, seen only at the fashionable hours. In Russia a man's rank is known by the number of horses he drives. One order of nobility, for instance, can drive two or three horses; but these are persons of very low dignity indeed. Another order can sport four, the one above it six; and so on. A merchant, however rich he may be, cannot go beyond the small number allowed to his guild. The great point therefore is to have number, not quality; and four bad horses are thought much more of than two good ones worth treble the money. If a poor prince were to drive one less than his right, he might be taken for a rich count, which would be disgraceful. The consequence is, that you may often see the most singular mixture of steeds to one carriage—dissimilar in colour, size, paces. One thing, however, there is always sure to be—black straggling traces between the different pairs, shaking most clumsily up and down, and so long, that Ducrow might leap his whole stud across the interval without troubling their noble master to stop.

The coachman intrusted with this sorry squa-

dron would appear to be selected by the size of his beard; in the same way that in London this functionary is chosen, as the French maintain, by the bulk of his person. He occupies a lofty seat, commanding a view of his whole charge; but the front pair is generally managed by a youth, seated on what we would call the *wrong* side, who has not yet acquired the honours of a beard, but tries to borrow dignity from a round black hat and long flowing blue coat—the most awkward garment possible for sitting on horseback with.

The carriage itself is as uncouth as all the other parts of this untidy display. In fact, with their inclination to imitate every thing foreign, it is surprising that the Russian nobility have not long since discarded their unseemly equipages, and adopted our English style, as most other nations are trying to do. *Four* horses abreast, which are often seen, look very well; and we were still better pleased with four abreast and *two in front.*

They have one kind of vehicle which looks extremely smart; a sort of droschky, but very different from the common one; in fact, a cabriolet without the head, on four low wheels, drawn by two, sometimes three, horses abreast, of which the one in the shafts is always kept at a furious trot, while the others are advancing at

a gallop. These latter, being trained to bend the head and curve the neck outwards, give a most graceful look to the concern, as they bound along with their long manes floating about them. None but the finest horses are ever seen in this gay vehicle. It is the favourite equipage of the young noblemen and rich officers, and is also much used by the emperor in his flights about the city. An attempt has been made to imitate it at Berlin, and it is likely to become fashionable in other capitals.

In the distant parts of the Nefskoï the pedestrian crowd consists of Russians, but nearer the palace, and in the openings branching off in that vicinity, the stream is chiefly composed of people from other nations. This is the place, therefore, for saying a few words concerning the *foreigners* in St. Petersburg; and, first, as the most conspicuous, of the *French.*

From the inscriptions on the sign-boards, all along the Nefskoï, one might almost suppose himself in France. *Marchande des modes, gants de Paris, foulards, bas de soie, chapeaux*, and the names of all the other articles of the toilette, are as frequent as in the Rue de la Paix; and the *demoiselles de comptoir* acquit themselves with all the grace of the school they were bred in. In every shop of this quarter, either the wife or the husband, not

unfrequently both, are from Paris. France also supplies the people of St. Petersburg with dancing-masters, ballet-masters, opera figurantes, and hairdressers beyond number.

Germany, again, supplies hands for the heavier and more laborious kinds of work; tailors, cabinet-makers, gunsmiths, &c., invariably belong to that nation. In fact, the number of Germans in St. Petersburg is quite surprising, and does not appear to be decreasing. The German goes any where for bread; he has no home. Germany is still the country of his love, his dreams; but, unlike the Swiss or the Scotch, who also wander in their youth, but only in their youth, the German, if he is comfortable, seldom seeks to revisit his fatherland, even when he has become independent Hence it is that the number who speak the German language here is so great. Whole families born in St. Petersburg of German parents speak it more than Russian. From the close alliance with Prussia, since a princess of that country has been empress, the greatest influx of new comers is from Berlin; but in former times Dresden sent a large proportion. Without reckoning those employed in the army, or high government offices, there cannot be fewer than 10,000 Germans here. A great many of them, as well as of the French, are employed about the theatres. At

one time the number of German officers in the different regiments was immense; indeed it is to them that Russia owes all her military instruction, from the days of Peter downward.

From the analysis of the population given at the end of a foregoing chapter, it is not possible to ascertain the precise number of foreigners here; the greater part of them being mixed up with Russians, under the general heads of *merchants* and *artisans*: but, from what we are told, the total number of foreigners must be from fifteen to twenty thousand, all gaining a respectable maintenance by their industry. There is a considerable proportion of *Swedes*, in some handicrafts. Of *Italians* there are also many: a sad change it must be to leave their sunny land for such a climate! But what will not men do for independence? They are chiefly employed as architects, painters, and singers. To them, as to foreigners of every nation, government affords every encouragement and protection; in many instances they enjoy privileges not extended to natives; and this system the emperor must continue, until the Russians can do more for themselves.

Of *English* there is a great number here; but as they are nearly all engaged in the higher branches of commerce, they seldom form a conspicuous part of the city crowd which has sug-

gested these remarks. An English sign-board is very rarely seen. Our countrymen will therefore, with more propriety, be spoken of under a separate head.

In one respect the crowd of St. Petersburg disappoints us: we hear so much of the emperor's military propensities, that we had expected to find his capital little better than a large camp, where we should meet soldiers at every step, and rub shoulders with generals at every turn. But the number of soldiers seen in the streets is extremely small: we may walk half an hour and not encounter one. Many of the troops, we were aware, had gone to the camp of Tzarkoie-celo; but the number necessary for the ordinary duties of the garrison had not been diminished. In fact, epaulettes and tight-buttoned coats are much more rare than in Berlin, where the crowd is often more than half made up of military men. We have seen a sentinel near the Brandenburg gate salute twenty times in as many minutes, even when there was no especial occasion for officers being abroad; but in the most frequented parts of St. Petersburg, we passed day after day without seeing a musket moved. In short, though we expected to be tormented both night and day with warlike noises—with din of troops marching and countermarching—we did not once hear the

sound of fife and drum all the time we were in the capital. We never saw any large body of military, unless when we went to some place on purpose. Among the soldiers met in the streets, however, one thing struck us as curious enough—the profusion with which medals are lavished on all who have served any time. It is quite ridiculous: a medal would seem to be given for every action, great or small, in which the troops are not beaten. We often see sergeants with as many as *seven* medals glittering in a line across the breast, like watches in a shop-window.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PEASANT IN CHURCH; SIGN OF THE CROSS; BELLS; SUPERSTITIONS.

Popular devotions — Priests — Chanting — Genuflexions — Melancholy sight—Ignorance of true religion—Crossing themselves from morn to night—Their respect for bells—Pleasant associations—Superstitions—Fortune-telling—Gipsies — Lucky days—Thirteen at table—Upsetting the salt—Meeting a monk, &c. —Fatalism—Opposed to insurances, &c.—Russians very charitable to the poor.

With all their equipages and decorations, this crowd of nobles, foreigners, and soldiers, in the gay Nefskoï, is not so attractive as our humble friends in the sheepskins. To a stranger, the genuine new-caught Russian is worth all his civilized superiors in the empire. Wherever he may be seen, he is a most interesting subject for study; but nowhere more than in church.

Follow him into the beautiful temple of the Virgin of Kasan, and you find him on his knees, repeating his prayers after the priest, with a fluency which nothing can arrest, and a devotion which nothing can distract. Pass him, or jostle

him as you may, he is too deeply engaged with his pious work to take the least notice of you. It is always painful to be present, an unconcerned spectator, where a religious service is going forward in which the heart cannot join. We feel as if intruding on that which we have no right to witness, and seem to scoff without wishing to do so. In Russia, however, there is no occasion for feeling thus. Let the stranger take off his hat on entering, and he is no more looked at than one of the pillars: he disturbs nobody.

We are here surrounded by splendour. The noble simplicity of the design—two long pillared aisles in the form of a cross—only renders the richness of the materials more conspicuous. From a floor of the costliest marble, the eye rises to a light and lofty dome, spangled with stars of gold, that twinkle from a sky of the deepest blue. There is neither gallery nor buttress to break the fine height. Even the dais, occupied by the priests, scarcely breaks the general outline; it is but a simple step or two, not far from the entrance. There they stand, in strong array, with long beards flowing over their robes of embroidered crimson, and wearing a lofty black hat, that gives yet more dignity to their stately forms. Their deep rich voices make the vaults ring, as they chant the prayers, aided by a band of

bearded choristers, ranged beside singing-desks, within a side-railing. Great care being taken in training the singers, this part of the service is always exceedingly impressive; finer voices we have never heard.

But the crowd of worshippers is the most interesting sight. Every person as he enters kisses the sacred picture near the door, or tries to reach that hanging on the wall,—to which latter, as it is of more than ordinary sanctity, you may see parents raising their little infants, that they too may touch it with their lips. Of these effigies, as hinted elsewhere, the more sacred usually have the brow, the cheeks, and the arms covered with silver, the votive offering of the pious, whose gratitude to the saint whom he thus seeks to honour for deliverance from sickness or danger, has overcome his taste; for the appearance given to the picture by this tinsel covering is truly ludicrous. What makes them more hideous to the indifferent spectator, however, only gives them greater attraction in the eyes of the faithful. To these, accordingly, the people flock in greatest numbers.

His salutation over, the peasant selects a place for himself on the floor, as near the priest as possible. There is a woman in one of the aisles, with a small table or basket before her, selling long slen-

der tapers; and from her the more devout make a purchase, and, lighting it, set their offering on one of the little triangular frames of wood, planted among the pillars, and stuck all over with nails for attaching these gifts to. Though it be sabbath, many workmen are busy polishing some steps with pumice, within a few feet of the officiating priests; but no one is distracted by the noise; the people come here to pray, not to look about them.

The mutterings and prostrations of the worshippers are most singular. Some, on the outskirts of the assembly, may remain standing; but the greater part have their knees bent to the naked floor. At certain words, however, all, both those who were standing and those who kneel, strike their very foreheads on the earth, with great vehemence, uttering, at the same time, some words from the priest; and this again and again before the service is finished. Some poor old women are always the most conspicuous in these violent manœuvres; but all ages and classes, and both sexes, join with more or less ardour. At vespers, we have seen most respectably-dressed ladies going through the whole ceremony with great fury. In short, the mummery of their religion surpasses all that we had previously witnessed. There is nothing like it in Catholic countries; it can only be compared to the violence

of some of the Hindus. One can scarcely describe the emotion which he feels on seeing a crowded assembly going through all these crossings, and attitudes, and genuflexions, so strange and so outrageous. It is impossible not to be moved with sorrow for those who look upon such things as constituting religion.

Whether this extreme attention to *forms* be accompanied with any real religious *knowledge*, is a question which few foreigners are qualified to decide. Judging, however, from what we were told by Russians themselves, we cannot hesitate to say, that with the lower orders in this country, religion is little better than superstition. Of the true nature of the Great Atonement, they are utterly ignorant; and even of the first principle of all religion, the Existence of a Supreme, they entertain the most imperfect notions. With the boor, God is only something higher than the emperor; they think not of him as an omnipotent spiritual Being, but as one residing they know not where, who will punish them for neglecting church and their prescribed forms, nearly in the same way as they would be punished for disobeying a mandate of the emperor. Of a future state, their notions are also very indefinite.

In short, as has often been said before now, "the Russian's religion consists in being able to

make the sign of the cross." He is crossing himself all day long. When he first comes forth into the open air, in the morning, if no church be in sight from his own door, he listens for the first sound of some bell, then, turning towards it, crosses himself with great fervour, to ensure a blessing on the undertakings of the day. He crosses himself before and after each meal. When you make a bargain with him, he crosses himself that it may prosper. When his countryman spits upon him (as they do by way of anathema, when in anger with each other), he meekly crosses himself, to avert the curse. When the peasant, who is to drive you, takes the reins in his hand, he crosses himself to keep away accidents; and every steeple he passes gets the same mark of respect. Sometimes the edifice thus saluted is so far off that the stranger wonders at the quickness shown in discovering it, and is often at a loss to catch the distant hamlet where it stands. In like manner, the person sitting beside you in any public conveyance, crosses himself every time you start with new horses. What the old do thus frequently, the young of course imitate. If you give a child a piece of money, its little hand is up in a moment, to make the sign of the cross, by way of blessing and thanking you.

Much of this crossing work may be seen at all

hours—even in the streets;—for, whether in the city or in the country, no Russian ever passes a church without pausing when he comes opposite its centre, to make the sign of the cross, from brow to breast, and utter some pious ejaculation, prescribed for the occasion. This operation may be seen going on incessantly, before every church of the capital; and on the most frequented walks there are certain small places, like shrines, with pictures and gilding in them, in front of which it is also performed. It is not alone the grave and the aged who pause at these places, but also the giddy and the young. You have just seen some gray-haired general do it—but, wait one minute; a laughing band of youngsters is coming up. Now they are opposite the church or the shrine—their mirth and their talk have ceased—each crosses himself devoutly—utters a prayer or two—you see his lips moving—then passes gravely on, the laugh and the jest being resumed only when they are some way off.

So far is this crossing mania carried, that when a Russian enters your room, he cannot say "Good morning!" till he has crossed himself to the Saviour's picture. A man in any public way, such as an innkeeper, must always have a picture hung in his own apartment, in addition to that in the public room, to which each Russian turns before he

sits down to eat. While at breakfast at an inn one morning, in a small room off the public one, we were roused by the solemn chanting of a priest in his robes, whom we found, with his attendants, praying before the picture of our Saviour in the corner. Waiting to learn how the ceremony would close, we saw abundance of the usual signing; with the painted wooden crucifix in his hand, about a foot long, he made the sign of the cross towards each of the four corners, and withdrew. It appears that some of the priests have little to live by, beyond the offerings obtained from the people, for these chantings and crossings before their sacred images, or for saying prayers in families on high holidays.

Another very remarkable part of the religion of the Russians is their respect for bells; and there is something so inexpressibly sweet in the sound of all we hear in this country, that we can almost forgive this superstition. The air resounds with them from morn to eve. Every church is furnished with several; and among these some are very expensive. They have not the deep solemn sound of English bells, but a rich sweetness, never heard except here, and said, poetically perhaps, to arise from the predominance of silver in their composition. They are not *swung*, as with us; as if this were deemed too rude a way of treating these

venerated objects, it is merely the *tongue* that is moved. This is accomplished by tying a cord to the tapering point, and then pulling it forward or allowing it to sink back, so as to strike either side at pleasure. No sooner has the peasant caught the sound than his fingers are in motion to his forehead.

This reverence, perhaps, begins even when they are in the hands of the founder. The child casts its mite into the melting mass, and the beggar his only alms. The bride gives her ornaments, and the princess sells her pearls; all are eager to aid in the pious work. Gold and silver are, in consequence, so profusely parted with on such occasions, that some of these bells have grown to be the monarchs of their tribe. Russia boasts of having the largest bells in the world.

The day on which a bell is consecrated, is always marked with great solemnity and rejoicing; and throughout the whole of its existence it joins in the joy and in the gloom of the flock over which it presides; for it is tolled on every occasion of sorrow or of gladness. Little wonder that these objects are so much beloved: for, perhaps, the happiest and most romantic associations of the Russian are linked with his village bells.

In a land where there is so little bordering on romance, this trait of national character is not unwelcome. But if we attempt to ascertain what it is

they worship in their bells, the result will be far from distinct. We could never learn whether the salute in passing a church be to the building or to the metal: that it proceeds from respect to Him with whose service they are connected, would be asserting too much of a people, with the great mass of whom religion, we fear, is nothing but ignorance.

The Russians also place great reliance on the gifts of fortune-tellers. Gipsies consequently are a privileged race, and drive a thriving trade in the land. In short, the instances of credulity and weakness met with among the lower, and not unknown even among the higher classes, are most melancholy. The belief in lucky and unlucky days, for setting out on a journey or commencing any undertaking—the evil consequences of meeting certain kinds of people, such as a monk—the danger of having thirteen at dinner, or of upsetting the salt; in fact, all the absurdities which were so prevalent in Scotland, and which are not yet quite abandoned in many parts of it, still reign here with undiminished authority.

Their enmity to vaccination, already mentioned, arises from some superstitious scruple; and we all know that its introduction was opposed from similar motives, even in more enlightened countries, where it was pronounced impious to adopt

any such means for averting what was sent by Heaven.

It would appear to be from some notions of the same kind that the Russians have such a reluctance to insure houses, or property of any description. It is long since attempts were made to establish insurance companies; but, until very lately, such unbecoming schemes never met with encouragement. In fact, they are half Turks in their practice, if not in their faith; and act as if it were impious to struggle against fate.

One thing, however, must be mentioned that is greatly to their credit—their charity to the poor. In St. Petersburg very few beggars are to be seen; but in the country villages, when a carriage or stage-coach stops, some of them are instantly in attendance; and we never saw a Russian dismiss them unrelieved. A bearded merchant with whom we travelled for a few days, seldom passed a halting-place without leaving a liberal alms and his blessing.

It were unjust not to admit also, that in the character of the nation at large there may be discovered much of that meekness which is one of the best fruits of genuine religion. Their lords may be proud and tyrannical, but the people are the most patient, submissive creatures imaginable. Neither insult nor blows drive them to revenge.

For ten times less than what we have seen a Russian endure without a murmur, an Italian would plunge his knife to the hilt in the breast of his dearest friend. There is something touching in the patience with which wrong is endured here. You see a man struck—it is a too frequent sight. He is strong enough to crush like a worm the thing that has smote him; yet his hand is not raised in return; the silent reproach of his eye tells that he is not insensible to the indignity, though he will not, or dare not, resent it.

But of this more in a new chapter.

CHAPTER XII.

CRUELTY WITH WHICH THE LOWER ORDERS ARE TREATED—THEIR FOOD.

Meekness under the harshest usage—The scourge—Beatings—Severity of masters—Ladies and their servants—Family executioner—The butler punished—Brutality of government underlings—Scene with the policeman—with the post-office clerk—"Off hats"—Spitting when angry—Peasants kind and happy with each other—Their general character—Honesty—Easily contented—Their food—Cucumbers, cabbage, sours—Wages—In general, better provided in regard to food and lodging than the Irish and some of the Scotch peasantry.

THE position in which the Russian serfs stand towards the proprietors of the soil, will be more particularly mentioned at a future page, when the emperor's reforms come to be discussed. At present, we are giving merely a few *general* facts, illustrative of the condition of the lower orders.

The peasant, then, as was hinted at the close of the last chapter, seems to be at the mercy of all who choose to lift the arm against him. His lord orders him stripes, as many and as often as he pleases. The poor creature is made to stoop on

his hands and knees, while a man smites him with a rod on the back the prescribed number of times. Though degrading, however, this chastisement is not often severe; it is quite distinct from the terrible *knout*, which is inflicted only by the sentence of a judge, and lacerates the sufferer so dreadfully that it is long before he recovers, if at all.* This latter species of torture we never saw inflicted; indeed we purposely avoided seeing it; but no one can be long in Russia without seeing many instances of the common beating. When a workman offends his overseer, he is punished with stripes. A poor labourer on one of the churches, who had been ordered to let none pass through a certain part of the building, having inadvertently allowed a party of us to do so, remonstrated with us for our conduct, and, in enumerating the serious consequences that would ensue to him from our trespass, significantly pointed to his back, imitating the blows which awaited him.

Nobles and military men, all who wear a government uniform of any kind, seem to possess—or if they do not possess it, they exercise—the privilege of beating the lower orders, whenever they feel offended with any of them. It is thus that the peasants crouch before their superiors in terror.

* See Chap. XXII. on *Prisons*, &c.

Even the *servants* of the better classes claim the privilege of beating those beneath them; but it is only to be themselves beaten in their turn by the master himself, or by his executioner,—who, though this may not be his name, is an indispensable appendage to every great establishment. The Russians try to conceal from strangers that they chastise their domestic servants in this way: we ourselves saw no instance of it, but we have been told by an Italian, in whom we have every confidence, who had lived among the nobles in the country, that he knew it to be a regular practice. At dinner one day, in the house of a man of high rank, one of the principal servants, equivalent to our butler, omitted something at table—a mere trifle; but the master's blood was chafed at the mistake—his face grew black. He was too polite, however, to say a word before a stranger; but this self-command did not save the offender. The *private signal* had been given to the man of the scourge, who understands too well to need that his master should betray his barbarity in the presence of foreigners; and that night a respectable domestic *bled* for an offence which every where else would have been sufficiently rebuked with a word!

None are more strict, he said, than *ladies*, in punishing their servants. The executioner's

office is never a sinecure in families where there is no master. Delicate creatures they must be, these Russian dames!

Even in other parts of Europe, the Russians—gentlemen at least—cannot, good imitators though they be, at all times forget their native rights so completely as to refrain from striking those whom they have brought from home with them. If they comply with our usages so far as not to do it very openly, they indemnify themselves for the denial by a little private discipline now and then. For when some gentlemen were lately about to take possession of their apartments at Rome, the person in charge hinted that, though they were *forestieri*, she hoped they would not give her the same sort of trouble which a *Principe Russo*, the tenant for two winters past, had been in the way of giving. He was a very good personage in every other thing, but used to get into such a fury with his servant, and beat him so unmercifully, that poor Barbara lay quaking all night, in fear of finding one of the parties dead in the morning:—and so she would, had either of them been of her own less enduring country.

But though every noble may strike with his own hands, or order his domestic servants to be beaten by others, it is a mistake to assert, as has been often done, that a Russian nobleman can order

any poor man, at whom he takes offence, to be beaten with rods. *Without the concurrence of a magistrate,* no person can be formally beaten, unless by his own master or by his orders. This beating process, therefore, though there be quite enough of it, still does not go on to such an extent as Dr. Clarke and other authors have represented, in their well-wrought pictures of the emperor beating his prime-minister, the prime-minister his secretary, and so downwards, till, from the first to the last link in the social chain of Russia, there is nothing but stripes and howling, from morning to night.

This nominal protection of the magistrate, however, does not shield the poor man from much contumely and much wrong. The brutality with which he is treated is often of such a kind, as to be almost incredible when repeated. A gentleman told us one day at dinner, that he had just seen a police-officer reprimanding his inferior on the public quay. After abusing him in the most dreadful terms—Russian abuse is altogether hideous—he took the offender's nose in his fingers and twisted it violently, then spit in his face and walked away. With so good a lesson in rudeness from his superior, the poor watchman who had been thus treated, would, of course, tear the beard and trample on the body of the first peasant who fell into his clutches.

It should be mentioned, however, as a part of Rusian character, that this man, so ready to twist his inferior's nose, would be the most cringing creature possible before a superior. It is in this class of subordinates that the worst specimens of the nation are to be found. Unfortunately these are precisely the people whom foreigners come most in contact with; and such being the case, can it be wondered at that so many travellers go away with an abhorrence of the nation?

There is nothing that a Russian underling is so tenacious of, as that every person who has any thing to do with him shall take off his hat before him — a formality which Britons in general are so little prepared for, that we were not surprised to read in the newspapers some time ago, of an Englishman at St. Petersburg having got into most serious difficulty, in consequence of some rudeness shown to him at a public institution, before the officers of which he had not supposed it necessary to cringe hat in hand.

We can fully believe what has been reported of this case, after witnessing the following *off-hat* scene in the lobby of a post-office in one of the towns in the interior. A foreigner, who had a letter to despatch, knocked at the little window and civilly asked the clerk who appeared, "*Est-ce*

ici que l'on affranchit les lettres pour Saint-Petersbourg?"

"*Otez votre chapeau, d'abord,*" was the reply, "*et je vous dirai.*"

"*Je l'aurais déjà fait, si j'avais su que c'était nécessaire; mais je ne suis pas chez vous; je me trouve dans la foule, et dans une telle position, je ne vous dois pas cette politesse.*"

"*Otez votre chapeau, je vous dis,*" roared he in rising choler. "*On le fait toujours devant des gens comme il faut.*"

"*Monsieur, je ne viens pas pour discuter. Faites-moi le plaisir de prendre ma lettre—*"

"*Otez votre chapeau,*" was again the monster's reply, "*Otez votre chapeau, ou je ferme la grille.*"

It would have been superfluous to have told this man *comme-il-faut,* that it was never customary to take off the hat to a person when you were speaking through a hole to him—that neither in London, Paris, nor St. Petersburg, was it usual to make people take off their hats in a public lobby. To have reasoned with him longer would have been as wise as to hold parley with the Russian bear. The best argument for such a man, and the whole of his too numerous tribe, is that employed by the emperor, who causes every fellow

guilty of behaving rudely in matters of duty, to be scourged *comme il faut.*

Generally speaking, nothing can be more brutal than the conduct of every man wearing a uniform, whenever he has it in his power; it is in this way that the underling revenges himself for the contumelious treatment he is doomed to endure from those above him. To the poor in particular, they behave in a way which it makes the cheek burn to think of. Fortunately, however, this official brutality is not imitated by people of the lower ranks in their intercourse with each other. Their taskmasters may be cruel and arbitrary, but the peasants among themselves are affectionate and sympathizing to a remarkable degree: they may squabble *in words*, and that most furiously—railing at each other with amazing volubility—but they seldom come to blows. One part of their conduct to each other when angry is far from laudable—it is the fashion, already alluded to, of *spitting* with contempt at the man who displeases them. This is done also by the better classes, with those whom they cannot venture to beat. In fact, it is common in all ranks; and is put in force on all occasions of provocation or dissatisfaction, however trivial. Thus, a person who was one day helping us to buy a carriage, was so much offended by the

coachmaker's exorbitant demands, that he spit upon him and turned away in disdain. The fashion would seem to be of oriental origin. Mussulmen, it is well known, *spit on the ground* when enraged.

It is seldom, however, that the lower orders of Russians go beyond this in their quarrels. We never saw a fight amongst them of any kind, but scenes of hugging and kissing are most amazingly frequent among the bearded gentlemen. Their politeness to each other knows no bounds. Two fellows in sheepskins, when they happen to be intimate friends, bow to each other in passing, as profoundly as a couple of French Academicians. This bowing propensity is not so indiscriminate, however, as among the French, who bow to all, friend and foe, but more especially to their superiors. The Russian, on the other hand, seldom takes any notice of those he does not know: it is only to his woolly brother that his ragged hat comes off in passing along the road. To the stranger who asks his assistance, however, he is most polite, being all attention to his but half intelligible inquiries, and at great pains to aid him in every way. The smallest trifle pleases in the shape of a reward for any service of this kind. If you are a foreigner, and speak the language imperfectly, he will never smile at your blunders, as most Englishmen do, and

cannot resist doing, when addressed by a foreigner in similar circumstances. Instead of laughing at you for making mistakes, the Russian's wonder seems to be that you know a word at all; and though generally quick in seizing your intentions, even when imperfectly expressed, he is always eager to encourage, and help out with the attempted explanation.

Duplicity and treachery, so far as our experience went, are extremely rare amongst them. We do not recollect a single attempt to extort money from us, on the score of our being foreigners. The shopkeepers, indeed, always asked too much for any thing we wanted to buy; but this they practise on their own countrymen, with the same latitude as on strangers: it is never looked upon as cheating, but merely as a necessary branch of the art of bargain-making, which both parties, buyer and seller, are supposed to have studied in its fullest extent.

In short, we have every reason to look upon the great mass of the people as of excellent natural dispositions—patient under wrong—amiable, warm-hearted, and grateful to those who treat them well. When confidence is reposed in them, their honesty is proof against every temptation. It is well known that there is a particular class of poor peasants, from certain districts in the interior, employed by

the greatest merchants of St. Petersburg, in collecting and paying money; and such is their integrity, that, though sums to a vast amount are daily passing through their hands, not a penny has ever been embezzled by them. An English merchant, who probably pays away more than any other trader in Russia, says, that he has for many years been in the habit of sending money to remote parts of the country by one of these men, without ever losing one farthing of it; though, from the distance of the places where the payments had to be made, he had repeatedly had it in his power to embezzle large sums, without the remotest chance of detection until too late.

From the whole of our intercourse with them, therefore, as well as what we heard from friends who have been long in St. Petersburg, we are firmly persuaded that Dr. Clarke's character of the lower orders of Russians is unjust. Faults they have, and those not a few; but they are not the lying, dishonest creatures he paints them, more than they are the exemplary, faultless beings which Russian authors have of late begun to hold them up for.

The Russian peasant is satisfied with the plainest food. No people in Europe are so coarsely fed. Their diet consists of the most acrid articles that were ever devised—pickled cu-

cumbers, pickled cabbage, or pickled mushrooms, with a piece of black bread, are their daily fare. At rare intervals, they may taste a little fish, or even butcher-meat; but these also—the fish at all events—are atrociously acrid. To satisfy this taste for sours, the quantity of cucumbers raised here is quite surprising: every market-place in the kingdom displays heaps of them from side to side. In the country towns, a hundred good ones may be bought for threepence. At the tables of the middle classes they are seen almost every day, and are presented in the usual way—that is, in slices. But the poor seldom use them until prepared in something of the following fashion: A cask, not always very clean, is strewed with a layer of fresh oak-leaves at the bottom. Over this, a layer of cucumbers is placed; after which, more leaves—then cucumbers again—and so on till the vessel is full. A pickle of salt and water is now poured in, till the whole be well saturated; and so strong is the compound, that, when stored in a cold place, the cucumbers will keep a whole year in their briny element. Eaten in moderation, the cucumber thus prepared will be found a very tolerable relish, even by the stranger.

Their *cabbage* we did not taste, but were told that it is not unlike the *sauer-kraut* of the Germans, though the mode of preparation is not

quite the same. Instead of employing vinegar and juniper-leaves in the process, the Russians simply slice the vegetable very small, then pour water over it, and let the compound lie until the cabbage becomes sour by the fermentation that has taken place. This fermenting process goes best on, of course, in warm weather: when it has been favourably performed, the vegetable may be preserved till summer come again.

We have said that *mushrooms* constitute another great article of food among the peasants; but of the way in which these are preserved, as well as of the nature of some other national dishes, something will be said in another place. Suffice it here to state that, as eaten by the peasant, mushrooms are beyond all endurable sourness. We remember tasting them one day in a market-place among some soldiers, who were licking their lips with delight over them; and we thought the taste most horrid. They appear to salt them as we would beef.

In short, the Russian peasant lives on sours—unless his food burn the palate, it would do him no good. But, without dwelling longer on this subject, enough has been said to show that his diet is wretched. As may easily be inferred, it is also very unwholesome. The constant use of nothing but salted food, renders the Russians more liable to

scorbutic diseases than any nation in Europe. Though now less frequent, these are still extremely common.

That the food of the Russian peasant should be so poor will not surprise any, who consider that his earnings are exceedingly small. Nine roubles a week —or seven shillings and sixpence, English—are frequently all that a labourer can gain; and, even in the manufactories, the best hands earn only eleven roubles, or nine shillings and sixpence of our money.

On the whole, however, so far at least as mere food and lodging are concerned, the Russian peasant is not so badly off as the poor man amongst ourselves. He may be rude and uneducated—liable to be ill-treated by his superiors—intemperate in his habits, and filthy in his person; but he never knows the misery to which the Irish peasant is exposed. His food may be coarse; but he has abundance of it. His hut may be homely; but it is dry and warm. We are apt to fancy that if our peasantry be badly off, we can at least flatter ourselves with the assurance that they are much more comfortable than those of foreign countries. But this is a gross delusion. Not in Ireland only, but in parts of Great Britain usually considered to be exempt from the miseries of Ireland, we have witnessed wretchedness compared with which the

condition of the Russian boor is luxury, whether he live amid the crowded population of large towns, or in the meanest hamlets of the interior. There are parts of Scotland, for instance, where the people are lodged in houses which the Russian peasant would not think fit for his cattle. During the present autumn (1838), in the rich and populous county of Inverness, we have beheld scenes of wretchedness, exceeding all that we ever witnessed, either in Russia or any other part of the world. There is one valley, that of Glenelg, where the families share their cabin with the cow and the pig; the latter, aided by a starved chicken or two, contending with the children for the comforts of their scanty fire, from which the cow is separated only by a wattled partition, the door in which is generally left open, that the breath of the animal may help the fire to keep the inmates warm. Chimney there is none in these miserable cabins; so that clouds of smoke constantly fill every corner, or issue from every crevice in the roof and walls: while, there being but one common door to the two divisions—that of the family and the cow—all that enter have to wade through the filth and water of the byre, before they can reach the precarious shelter of the principal quarter.

Compare the comforts of the Russian peasant with such misery as this! Before wasting our pity on

him, we ought to look at home, and try to silence the outcry which foreigners so justly raise against us, when they witness such scenes as these, in the wealthiest and most civilized country in the world.

Let it not be supposed, however, that, because we admit the Russian peasant to be in many respects more comfortable than some of our own, we therefore consider his lot as, on the whole, more enviable than that of the peasant in a free country like ours. The distance between them is wide—immeasurable; but it can be accounted for in one single word—*the British peasant has rights; the Russian has none!* Does mere abundance of food and fuel compensate for the want of all that gives a man respect in his own eyes, or dignity in the estimation of others? The hut of the meanest peasant in Britain is inviolable; that of the Russian may be invaded without permission and without warning. The poor man with us is not *chained* to his dwelling, but is free to dispose of his skill and labour where he thinks they will bring him the best return, without once consulting the lord of the soil, or paying him part of what he may earn throughout life. Above all, he is not liable to be transported as a convict to Siberia at the caprice of his lord,—relentlessly torn from wife, and friends, and home, without the power of remonstrance or the right of appeal.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE RUSSIAN PEASANT ASLEEP; AND AT WORK.

Sleeping in the streets—Fearless workmen—Giddy ladders—The man and the weathercock—Using the hatchet—Ingenious in copying any thing—Rustic pianoforte—Dexterous employment of their tools.

BEFORE leaving the Russian peasant altogether, let us glance at him in his ordinary pursuits. We have already seen some of his ways, but he is such an interesting fellow, that a few more moments with him will not weary.

Watch him, for instance, at work, and you will find him labouring most diligently—getting through an amazing quantity in any given time. So willing is he to toil while any good may be done, that, in the summer season, he lives almost without sleep. As if he had taken his fill of it in the long winter, he will now toil both night and day, with little rest beyond the hurried snatches of slumber at meal-hours. He seems to care little for a bed,

so long as the nights are short: the first shed or the first gutter is couch dainty enough for him. In the country villages, along the high-road, crowds of labourers may be seen stretched asleep in the open air, by the sides of houses; but in the capital, none are to be seen in the streets at night. During the day, however, just as among the poorer orders at Naples, you may see them in dozens, stretched near the house where they have been hewing, or by the boat which they were unloading, sleeping till the work-bell rouses them.

What struck us most in regard to these slumbering scenes was, the suddenness with which they fall into repose. Some men are said to be able to command sleep the moment they court its favours: the Russian peasant would seem to have the same power, for he is asleep as soon as the tools are thrown down. One moment of the vacant hour is given to the scanty meal—a poor onion, when cucumber may not be had, and a piece of rye-bread, need but little carving—and all the rest is bestowed on what, next to drinking, seems to be their favourite dissipation. They have no idea of filling up their idle time with a book, or talk, or any other intellectual exercise; like the beasts that perish, when appetite has been satisfied, they have no resource but slumber.

The positions they choose for this purpose are often most surprising. Where a piece of pave-

ment is under repair, in a crowded street, you may see them sleeping among the stones and mud, liable to be run over by the first wheel. A droschky-man falls asleep, standing by his horse's shoulder, and leaning his head on the poor animal, which never moves an ear for fear of disturbing him. In short, a Russian sleeps in every attitude, and on every kind of bed—sitting or standing—on the top of dung-carts, or perched on a load of stones. He is every where as happy as on a silken bed.

Sometimes the post which he takes up is still more dangerous: we have seen workmen stretched on the ridge of some roof which they had been repairing; and, passing along the quays, they may be seen at any time soundly asleep on the narrow parapet, where, if they turn but from the right side to the left, they have not an inch to save them from rolling into the deep river below. They may even be seen fast asleep in the sun, on the narrow edge of a loaded barge, near the strongest part of the stream: yet, so sound is their repose, that though you watch them till their short hour is out, you will not see them move limb nor feature. Tell the peasant of his danger, in thus exposing himself—remonstrate with him on his rashness—and he will not understand you. He does not know what fear is: his fatalism makes him careless of life.

He would even seem to have an affection for

giddy and terrifying positions. There is a kind of ladder used here—a single tree, often sixty feet long, with steps, about fifteen inches in length, nailed across it, affording almost no hold to feet or hands. At this season of cleaning and scrubbing, you are every minute passing some of these, raised from the street to the eaves, with a man seated at top, brushing away as thoughtless as if on the pavement. Nay, so little do they think of danger, that there is a companion below shifting the ladder every minute, to bring his comrade into a new position—both as fearless as if it could not be easily pushed from its balance, and one of them, at least, be dashed to pieces by the fall. This, in fact, does sometimes happen; but the mangled body is soon carried to the hospital, and the survivor, calmly raising the ladder, mounts to the vacant post, humming his interrupted song, before the blood has dried on the stones.

This intrepidity is often shown on heights more perilous than those now mentioned. Something had lately gone wrong about the angel that is perched on the lofty spire of the cathedral, in the fortress; which, being at an elevation of 350 feet from the ground, is among the most conspicuous ornaments of the capital. The repair wanted was so trivial that it could have been done by a single workman in a few minutes. But how to get him raised to the

airy weathercock was a question of difficult solution. To think of erecting a scaffolding, of some hundred feet, for such a small affair, was out of the question. Still, as the accident occasioned an eye-sore from the palace-windows, it was desirable to have it remedied in some way or other. For a long time, however, the superintendent was in despair; until at last relief presented itself through one of his workmen, a common *moozik* (peasant), who offered to climb up and put all right for 300 roubles. Consent having been gladly given, he mounted as far as possible inside, then crawled out by a hole, stuck in pegs for steps outside, as far as his arm could reach, and so, always driving in a new peg before he left the old one, crept fearlessly round and round the giddy spire, till he reached a point from which he could throw a rope over a projecting part of the figure; he then swung himself at once into the necessary position, where he plied his tools as calmly as if on solid ground! The spectators below were forced to turn away their heads in terror, expecting every moment to see him dashed to pieces; but he descended as safely as he had gone up.

The emperor, who never loses an opportunity of rewarding conduct of this kind, hearing of what had been done, caused a calculation to be laid before him of he expense which would have been in-

curred for scaffolding, wages, &c., had the repair been executed in the ordinary way; and presented the poor fellow with the amount—enough to keep him comfortable for life, without handling axe or rope again.

The neatness with which a Russian workman uses his tools is unequalled. In place of the ten or twelve different instruments, which a carpenter in other countries must have constantly about him, a Russian has only three or four; indeed, his principal and often sole companion is the axe—a sharp and good one it is, with a short handle. We have often watched him at work, laying a floor or making a chair, and it is really astonishing what he does with it alone. The ease, and the grace even, with which he wields it—always with one hand—would be a lesson to the most skilful of our artisans. Without plane or line, he cuts and joins two deals, as neatly as if they were one. A firm hand, a good eye, and great coolness, supply the place of tools to him.

The facility of imitation possessed by the Russians, is another remarkable point in their character. They cannot *invent*, but will *copy* any thing you choose to set before them. Say only, I want the match of this; and done it is—as correct a facsimile as could be desired. They will make not only small things in this way, but even large arti-

cles of the most complicated construction. We have examined a pianoforte, made the other year by a peasant in some country place, who had never seen but *one* in his life before. He had very few tools at command; but, thinking he should like to have an instrument to match the one whose sweet sounds had given him so much pleasure, he set to work, and made a most excellent copy. Some one having told the emperor of the feat, a handsome price was offered for the instrument, and it now occupies an honourable place in his own palace at Moscow.

These imitations are not confined to the ruder branches of mere mechanical labour. The Russians are equally successful in copying pictures, and in all the more delicate kinds of work, requiring accuracy of eye and delicacy of touch.

CHAPTER XIV.

POPULAR AMUSEMENTS ON THE ISLANDS.

Dances—Songs—Tales of a droschky—Russians fond of music—Summer-evening amusements — Dancing scene — Singing — Droschky journey—Anecdotes of the Isvoshtchiks—Merry scenes on the islands—Boating—More singing—Gay gardens—Noble villas—Mineral waters, &c.

PASSING from these physical pursuits, we shall find that in nothing are the imitative qualities of the Russians better seen, than in their national amusements and pastimes. To aid them in these, they possess great powers of mimicry; their excellence in which is of course greatly seconded by another endowment which, as may be inferred, from allusions already made, they possess in no ordinary degree—liveliness. They are blest with an astonishing flow of animal spirits. The fun and drollery displayed among them, when two or three are banded together on an idle holiday, are inexhaustible. Their wit is surpassed only by their playfulness and good-humour. On such occasions, dancing is a favourite amuse-

ment; and as for singing, whether there be holiday or not, they torment you with it beyond endurance. They sing for ever—such singing as makes you wish them fifty miles away. It is only the untutored song, however, that is disagreeable: when taught, they make excellent musicians. The regimental bands, it is well known, are among the best in Europe. So strong is their natural turn for music, that a lad taken from the plough will play the most difficult pieces in six months, on any instrument that may have been selected for him.

These qualities of imitation and liveliness make them excellent actors. They are born comedians; even the most vulgar of them showing a strong passion for every thing dramatic. On the stage, consequently, they are extremely natural, and keep the audience in constant laughter.

The national dance is very pretty. As seen in the theatre, it is an artificial unnatural series of complicated evolutions, intended to show the skill of the *artiste*, more than the real features of the dance, of which only some of the characteristics are retained. The true place for seeing it in perfection is among a group of peasants, keeping holiday in some of the suburbs. We had wandered out in one of the finest evenings of July, through the wide, quiet lanes in the lower part of

the Vassilii-Ostroff. Scarcely a creature was stirring in the calm sunset. We had reached the place where the houses almost terminate, or, at least, become more rare; where little is to be seen but extensive green meadows, neglected and marshy, with low bushes and rough trees scattered about. In short, there was so little to interest, that we began to think of returning,—when a shout of laughter from the neighbourhood of some houses farther on, induced us to advance. It came from a large group, assembled in a shady green lane, young men and maidens, all in the national dress. It was an unmixed Russian scene. Within the group stood a ring of dancers. Shortly, a youth touched a small instrument, the simplest ever heard: it was their *balileka*, a tiny thing of white fir-wood, shaped like a guitar, but only an inch thick, and with no more than three small strings, which the little boy jingled in a sort of measured way with his fingers, without attempting any thing like a tune. The sound was so faint that it was scarcely heard a few yards off, but no sooner was it struck than the whole ring was in motion, wreathed hand in hand. It is a beautiful dance, with something of classic gracefulness, and not the least motion that could be offensive to delicacy. As they twisted and turned, now moving slow, now quick, the descriptions of the

mazy dance of ancient Greece recurred to the memory. Soon, however, the whole again stood still — the dancers unlinked their hands — a maiden stood forth, and waved her white kerchief slowly and gracefully towards a youth, who, on the signal, pursued her round the ring at respectful distance. Once she allowed him to come near; but again she fled. At short intervals they would pause, and dance before each other, the youth now beating his right foot, in regular measure, on the sward, now waving his flowing caftan not inelegantly, as he turned in giddiness away from the glances of his beloved. At length it seemed as if the lover was to be rewarded with his mistress's hand; but ever as he took courage to come nearer, the coy maiden was off, flying from, yet courting his pursuit. This part of the dance continued till despair made him abandon the chase; on which the circle was again formed, and all tripped merrily round. There is nothing violent in these dances; every motion is slow and dignified; the woman resting her arms akimbo, and her partner calculating each step he is to make. All the men were in holiday dress; long blue robes, striped shirts, wide trousers, and huge boots.

The lovely evening invited to a farther stroll on the beach. On coming back to the merry crowd,

the dance had given way to the song. The maidens had left the group, but the men had formed a larger ring, and, united by their handkerchiefs from hand to hand, were moving slowly round two of their number, a big one and a little, standing in the centre. All the time this was going on, the whole band were singing a slow and very striking melody, which strongly resembled some of our old Scotch airs. They sung in parts, and kept up a kind of dramatic scene, of which those in the middle sustained the principal characters. The words, of course, were unintelligible to us; but the excellent pantomime which followed spoke for itself, especially where the big one feigned himself fatigued, and the little one,—who had a handkerchief tied round his head, and acted the part of a female,—tenderly taking off his (or her) partner's hat, fans him with well-assumed anxiety. She then wipes and braids his hair, opens his vest to give him air, and finally prevails on him to renew the dance.

We are not ignorant that some of the Russian dances are of a much less innocent character; but on this occasion, at least, it was impossible not to be struck with the orderly conduct of the lower classes. We had already experienced that it was possible to wander the streets all day long, without meeting a single instance of rudeness; and we

now discovered that strangers might look even on their amusements, when neither policeman nor patrole was within reach, without being at all annoyed. Several ladies, and other casual passengers, were attracted to this group of youngsters, and listened attentively to their fine singing. In England, such intruders would soon have been driven away by improper language, if not maltreated for their curiosity; but here, all went on as if no stranger had been near. Some of the dancers were in the boat as we recrossed; but they seemed more intent in watching the lightning, as it flashed, bright and frequent, on the clear bosom of the Neva, than in eyeing their late visitors.

There is no place where the manners of the people may be seen in all their life more frequently, than in the gardens and pleasure-grounds of the islands lying among the various branches of the Little Neva, the Great and Little Nofka, &c. As these are a long way off, however, we must take a droschky to reach them; and, while on the way, shall tell the reader what a droschky is. Without knowing something about a droschky, no one can say that he knows aught of St. Petersburg.

This is one of the most absurd little vehicles ever invented. It consists of a low narrow seat,

covered with black leather, not much larger than a dragoon saddle, and supported on four small wheels, between the two foremost of which is a box for the driver. Any body who has seen a velocipede may form some idea of a droschky: as in that exploded contrivance, so here also you sit with the feet touching the ground on each side, or rather resting on metal steps, or, if you please, stirrups, which brush the mud below you. There is room, on a push, for two passengers; but they must sit face to face, as comfortable as a pair who should try to mount a horse together, looking into each other's face. Sometimes the passengers sit sideways, one on each side; or one does so, and the other rides *en cavalier*, holding him or her in his lap; but whatever way they sit, two always cut an awkward figure in these machines.

There is neither flap nor hood to hide you from the *isvoshtchik* (*driver*), who is generally some peasant that has mustered money enough among his friends in the country to buy a good horse, and hire a droschky, in order to make a little fortune in the capital. His black hat and long blue garment are supposed to give him great dignity; but the filthy state in which his person generally seems to be, renders him by no means an enviable companion to sit so near. He has no whip; the long reins terminating in a tough piece

of leather, which supplies the place of that article. They drive extremely well; but have the character of being great extortioners when a stranger comes in the way. "How much must I pay for a drive to ——?" "Five roubles," (or 4*s.* 2*d.*) is the answer. If you have Russian enough, offer him 8*d.*, and he is sure to take it. We always found, when in company with Russians, or with countrymen who speak the language, that we could drive an amazing distance for a small sum.

Nor is extortion the worst part of the isvoshtchiks' character: they are said to have a hand in many of the robberies and murders of the capital. Winter is the season for these crimes. There are many instances of women and helpless persons, who had employed them at night, having disappeared, and never been heard of. An English traveller has published a case of this kind, where the body, after being stripped of money and valuables, was supposed to have been thrown into a hole in the ice of the Neva; and we ourselves heard similar stories from many quarters. Until we reached Moscow, however, we met with no person who could speak from experience. An English gentleman there, told us that he had, the winter before, been the object of one of the most mysterious attacks ever heard

of in droschky annals. On leaving the theatre, he had hired the first vehicle that presented itself, and ordered the owner to drive to a certain part of the city. After proceeding for a considerable time through the silent streets, then covered with deep snow, he remarked to his guide that they were far out of the usual line, but received for answer that all would soon be right. On they went, the streets always getting more lonely and more unknown; when suddenly a man started from the corner of a cross-lane, and attempted to throw the noose of a large rope over the passenger; but before it caught he was able to disentangle himself, and urged the driver to press on. This command was so reluctantly complied with, that he now began to be suspicious of him, as an accomplice in the attack which had been made. Instead of holding on, he loitered and changed his course, evidently as if in consequence of a premeditated plan. This put the Englishman more on his guard, and he became anxious to leave him; but before he had time to escape, he felt himself entangled in a strong noose, by which he was dragged from his seat. After trampling upon and bruising him, his assailants robbed him of his watch and pocket-book, then left him senseless, with injuries that kept him long confined to his apartment. Meantime, the authorities had

been using every effort to discover the robbers. Several men had been arrested on suspicion, and the knout had not been unsparingly employed to make them confess; but the gentleman being unable to identify any of those in custody, the affair still remained a mystery at the time we heard the story.

The number of droschkies in St. Petersburg is immense. Indeed, a love for this vehicle would seem to be an inseparable part of the Russian character; it is to be seen in the remotest corners of the empire. But what especial recommendation it can have in such a climate, and on such roads as may be seen in every Russian town, it would be impossible to discover. There is no kind of shelter in it. When it rains, you are sure to be soaked; when there is mud, you are defiled to the eyes; when there is dust, you are choked; and when there is sun, you are roasted: in short, it is most ingeniously contrived for exposing you to the worst of every possible annoyance. It is, at best, a toy-looking carriage; for we are not speaking, be it remembered, of the gallant and fashionable droschky displayed in the Nefskoï, but of the genuine, original droschky, in which a person always looks like a schoolboy broke loose from his master, getting along as hard as the horse can fly; or a sailor newly paid off, who wants to make

a fine show on land, and get rid of his money in the shortest possible time.

It has the recommendation, however, of being easily mounted. There are neither steps to let down, nor doors to fasten; you take your seat as readily as in an arm-chair, and are off in a twinkling. These carriages also answer remarkably well at a public drive, when the dust is not too great, and where you want to see every thing without the distraction of driving. As already stated, however, few of the better classes appear in them on occasions of show; they are used only by people in a hurry. From the great distances they have to go in this wide desert of a city, servants in gentlemen's families, porters at the public offices, &c., always have a droschky at their disposal. The man who goes on foot, therefore, is here little thought of; nor can it be expected that he should, when the cookmaid would disdain to bring her vegetables, and the errand-man his letters, without the aid of a carriage, of some kind or other. There are hackney-coaches, or things very like them, to be had here; but they are dear, and seldom used unless by those going to the country.

During this long talk about droschkies, we have got over a wide stretch of ground, crossed the Great Neva, traversed the handsome streets of the

Vassilii-Ostroff, passed the bridge of the Little Neva, got through the low houses of old St. Petersburg, and away across Nefkas and branches innumerable, till now we scarcely know where we are; somewhere among the islands of Krestofski, Ielaghine, &c., which present as gay and happy a scene as heart could wish. Nothing can be more lively and varied than the sights witnessed here in summer. Some of the islands are adorned with the acacia, birch, aspen, willow, and other trees of summer foliage; while some are still clothed with all the gloom of their native pines. Gay palaces for the royal family, and handsome carriage-drives for the nobles, adorn a few, while on others the lower classes find the ordinary means of amusing themselves; eating-rooms, dancing-places, merry-go-rounds, wandering musicians, &c. These islands may, therefore, be said to form both the *Champs Elysées* and *Bois de Boulogne* of St. Petersburg. They are much farther away from the centre of the capital than these places are from that of Paris, but the cheapness of the droschky brings them near, as their crowded state shows.

Yet, crowded as the woods are by people of every rank, not a single act of disorder occurs. In another respect, too, these islands are far superior to the places of public resort near the French capital:

in the singular life and interest given to the scenes by the branches of the river, which twine round them in most confusing but beautiful variety. The waters are constantly enlivened by gay barges, shooting past in every direction, with lofty prows, and gaudy streamers floating behind ; in these, many, and generally the merriest parties, come al lthe way by the river; some shaded by striped awnings, some sitting unprotected, but all singing most beautifully.

Singing, in fact, is one of the great amusements on these islands; and though the Russian peasant is a most disagreeable vocalist when heard alone, nothing can be more delightful than to hear two or three of them joining in their national airs together. To the Russian, singing appears to be as natural as speaking is to other nations. The moment a stone-cutter gets the chisel in his hand, the song begins; and the *Yemtchik* (postilion), in seizing the reins, strikes up his horrid melody, as regularly as if the amount of hire depended on the qualities of his voice. Watch a party of friends returning at night: if in a boat, the oars keep time to their harmony ; if on foot, the pavement rings with their measured steps. But most of all, are they musical in their droschkies. Five, six, or eight of them will crowd on one of these vehicles: how they do not all

tumble off, like that bearded gentleman, or long-gowned lady, whom you see rolling in the mud not far off, is wonderful. Notwithstanding this accident, the song is not stopped—the vehicle is, perhaps, but the worthy fallen continues his song till raised by his brethren, who build themselves on again, and drive away, with a fury of voice increased by the delay.

Their love of music is well seen among the crowds on the islands. The rope-dancers — the mountebanks—the man who exhibits a live seal, which he keeps in good humour by always pouring water on its back from a tub, and rubbing it with his hand —the bird-trainer—even the man with the badger, and other exhibitors of curiosities, natural and artificial, generally have but a small ring of admirers, compared with that which hangs in breathless silence round a band of singers, or horn-players. The latter are extremely interesting, but our surprise in hearing them was less, from having previously heard so much about their skill. Not so, however, with the singing-band; for their powers went far beyond all the ideas we had ever formed of Russian music. Those we listened to were mere peasants; but they had an advantage over those formerly heard, in having been well taught, and thus were able to execute the most difficult passages, with an ease and a finish that

would not have disgraced a company of Italians. Indeed, the whole performance reminds one of Italian music. The very language, rough and guttural as we generally suppose it, sounds soft and musical in the lips of the natives.

These entertainments have always something dramatic. We could not, of course, understand a word of them; but some were serious, some comic. The latter partook much of the manner of the quick and lively dialogue of the Italian *buffo comico*. The serious differed from most things of the kind we had ever heard: two or three were reciting a tale of sorrow, in which one of their number, who stood alone, was the principal party; they were bewailing the death of his mistress. Ever and anon, when they came to some more affecting turn of the narrative, he would strike in with a plaintive exclamation, as if in the deepest grief; the others would then resume their part, and at times all would unite in a chorus, as wild and touching as a Highland Lament.

We saw on these islands almost every kind of popular amusement peculiar to the country, except that of the "Russian Mountains," which the season of course forbade. This exercise is the favourite sport in winter, when mountains of snow are formed on the Neva, down which they slide

with giddy fury. From all we could hear of it, the amusement is not unlike one well known in some parts of Scotland, under the name of hurley-hacket, which, if school-day recollections can be trusted, is performed by sliding down a steep bank of sand or loose gravel, pretty much in the same attitude as that assumed by the Russians on the more slippery ice.

The variety and originality of the scenes presented in this quarter, invariably kept uslingering till the latest twilight. The carriages of the nobility might be seen waiting in long files till near eleven, the more select avenues being generally crowded with fashionable loungers. Besides the summer palaces of the imperial family, these islands, and their neighbourhood on the mainland of the Carelian shore, are adorned with the pretty *Datcha*, or summer villas of the nobility, scattered about in great variety of plan. The snug cottage of England may be seen side by side with the fantastic pinnacles of China. The grounds of the Strogonoff villa, which are open to the public, contain a Greek sarcophagus and other specimens of ancient art. There is a theatre also in this region, which is open only in summer, for French plays and Italian operas. Another attraction is the establishment where mineral waters of all kinds are manufactured "to order:" you may here drink

the waters of Töplitz, or of Ems, of Cheltenham or of Barèges, just as the doctor or fancy may prescribe. These establishments for imitating every kind of mineral water by chemical combinations (first attempted by Dr. Struve, a celebrated chemist of Dresden) are spreading rapidly on the continent.

It is now time, however, to leave the islands. Bidding good night to the groups still dancing merrily, even at this late hour, we shall return by the longest bridge in the capital—that above the fortress. A night's rest will qualify us for new expeditions of discovery, among our interesting friends of the lower classes, to whom our out-of-door excursions were chiefly devoted.

CHAPTER XV.

SCENES IN THE FISH-BARGES—BATHS—BAZAARS, AND MARRIAGE MARKET.

Live fish—Tethered sturgeon, and winter fare—Betting—Hawkers of lemonade—Russian baths—The effect of bathing on the habits, &c.—Scenes in the Gostinoï Dvor—Importunate merchants—Bargaining—The old-clothes mart—Old iron—Visit to the summer garden—How to get married.

To give a full account of *all* that struck us as remarkable in this wonderful city, would only weary the reader. Where we are hourly wandering

"'Mong many things most new to ear and eye,"

a selection must be made; else attention will be exhausted, long before the narrator has got half through his tale.

Among the places, however, which do not tire in visiting—and which consequently are not likely to tire in reading of them,—a few still remain to be mentioned. Of these, none better deserve attention than the FISH-BARGES, or floating houses near the Isaac bridge, in which the finny tribes are preserved alive in great numbers. The bottom of

each huge ark is occupied by square wells, each devoted to a distinct kind of fish. Here may be seen the cheap carp swimming next door to the costly sterlet (of whom more, under the head of *National Dishes*), and a few feet away from these, eels and flounders may be seen sporting with great activity, in the perilous vicinity of a voracious, large-mouthed gentleman from the Baltic, who would give something that the plank between him and his dear friends could be removed.

But what strong-snouted fellow is this, who next claims our notice? It is a huge sturgeon *(sturio huso)*, swimming at large in the river, with a thick rope through his upper jaw, by which this "triton among the minnows" is kept as safe as a seventy-four struggling within the Plymouth Breakwater. The thick knot above the horny gristle keeps him so securely, that you may haul him home, and examine him at leisure. Here he comes, splashing about as formidable as a young shark, though not quite so large as the sturgeons on the American coast, which the Yankees accuse of swamping their boats; nor even like those of the mouth of the Danube, where they are sometimes found weighing 1500lbs. Those of Lake Baikal, where they are very numerous, are of much more moderate dimensions, seldom exceeding 200lbs. weight.

The rope next to this one moors a smaller cap-

tive, perhaps of a different species. Poor fellows! they must lead a sad life of it, notwithstanding this seeming liberty of theirs: for every hard-hearted kitchen-wench, or more scientific but equally cruel *maître d'hôtel*, who wants a good fish to complete a dinner, has the right to tug them about at pleasure, till some one, captivated by their charms, compassionately ends their amphibious existence.

This fashion of mooring the live fish resembles a practice which is very common in Egypt; though, in a country where there is so much ice, it cannot arise from the same cause—namely, the difficulty of preserving dead fish in summer. When the binny or barbel of the Nile is hooked, the fisherman puts a strong ring through the jaw, ties a few cords to it, and, returning the fish to the river, fastens him to the shore: thus he goes over the whole file of his hooks, not one of which is unoccupied. It is only in the dog-days, however, that the fish-markets of Russia and Egypt bear any resemblance to each other. In winter the fishes of St. Petersburg need neither rope nor tank to hold them. Land-carriage, by means of sledges on the snow, being then cheap, they are brought from great distances, and in large quantities, completely frozen; in which state they are sold much cheaper than at other seasons. Indeed, contrary to the usual rule,

winter here is in some respects a season of greater plenty than summer: beef, which the heat prevents from being transported sound in summer, is then brought upon sledges from the distant provinces, and sold in its frozen state so cheap, that the peasant can allow himself a piece of it to the cabbage he has hewn from the tub with his axe.

Fishing would seem to employ a good many hands about the capital in summer. Boats of small size may be seen constantly at work in the shallow waters of the bay, and occasionally off the quays in some parts of the city, where, we believe, fishing is often made a kind of gambling concern: Before a net has been hauled in, some person in the crowd at the landing-place agrees to give so much for whatever it contains; or two or three unite in the venture. The result of the speculation is of course variable, there being often nothing at all for the rash gambler, though at other times a considerable sum may be realized.

Great numbers of the lower orders are employed in selling lemonade and other refreshing drinks, very essential to the pedestrian's comfort, in the warm days of July. Some of these liquors are made from cranberries and such forest dainties. The large red bottles in which the mixtures are exhibited make a most showy display, on benches near the crowded thoroughfares, where many a

brawny youth, in red-striped surtout, may be seen strolling about, with his whole stock in trade slung on his back, in a portly-bellied crystal jug, half full of the tempting beverage.

The best way of all, however, to dispose of oneself in a warm day, is to visit one of their BATHS. A passion for the bath forms such a striking part of the Russian character, that we ought to have mentioned it more particularly long before now. For a Russian to live without the bath, would be as impossible as for him to live without food. Ablutions are prescribed by his religion too. They are not now performed, however, in the promiscuous way described by early travellers, who speak of men and women as frequenting the bath together. We found no instance of this in any part of the empire.

At the one we visited in the capital, there was no other person in the room going through the bathing process; but, it being Saturday night, the adjoining chambers were full of customers. We had expected to find an immense open yard, or something of that kind—at least, a large hall of rude structure, ringing with the yells of swimmers; but found the bath a handsome house, like a private dwelling, in a well-kept courtyard. An office for the clerks and superintendents is near the principal entrance, from which a broad passage

runs the whole length of the building. From this passage, doors open on either hand into sunk apartments of different sizes, paved with clean flagstones, and often with marble. On entering one of these, the heat was so great, that it seemed wonderful how the human frame could endure it.

"Where are the baths, though?" asked the simple foreigner: "There is no water here, and how can a man bathe without water?"

In Russia, kind reader, when you go to take a bath, you are plunged, not into *water*, as you had fondly expected, but into *vapour*. The patient, having duly stripped in an adjoining room, is seated by the man in attendance, on the lowest of a range of steps, running round the whole of the generally oval chamber, and rising like a stair towards the ceiling. Here he sits patiently, though at first most uncomfortably—for he fears the heat will suffocate him—going through all the rubbings, and strainings, and knucklings, which the operator thinks fit to inflict. It is necessary to rise from step to step, in order to reach an always increasing degree of heat, which, instead of being unpleasant, has now become quite delightful; the oppressive feeling having gone off as soon as the perspiration broke freely out. In fact, the sensation is now so pleasant, that the bather is willing enough to remain. Hitherto the process has been in

general, not unlike the Turkish bath; but the scourging with birch rods, which ere long begins, is very different from both the Turkish and English ideas of *scourging* and of *birch*: it is one of the most pleasant and original devices in the whole process. But when the truly Russian *finale* comes—the sousing with ice-cold water, while you are still melting with heat—the poor stranger is completely startled; for a moment he loses all sensation—but, that moment over, he feels a glow of comfort, of which no language could give an idea.

The heat of a Russian bath is seldom lower than 100°, nor higher than 200° of Fahrenheit. A beginner remains only twenty minutes in the place, but the experienced visitor tarries more than twice as long. The assistants rub the body with soap, bran, &c. during a great part of the time, and often pour cold water on the head, or tie a wet towel round it. In the houses of the nobles, the baths are most luxuriously fitted up, and a considerable part of the household have no other duties, than to minister to this part of their master's enjoyments. In such private baths, it is customary to drink largely of some cold, but not intoxicating liquid, after the process; but we saw nothing of this in the public ones. In country villages the common bath is generally a very rude affair—a mere shed by the river, into which the peasants plunge im-

mediately after exposing themselves to the first part of the cleansing operation.

The stranger, of course, pays high for a bath—seldom less than three roubles; and for an ordinary bath, with water, &c., five. To the lower orders, however, it costs but a mere trifle, though they have not yet quite brought it down to the classic standard of ancient Rome, where a bath cost only about half an English penny (a *quadrans*, or fourth part of an *as*.)

As to the boasted effects which this bath—or rather the habit of bathing in this way—is said to have in bracing the frame, making the Russians hardy, &c., they are all imaginary. Instead of bracing the frame, this habit enervates and undermines it most rapidly. Look at the Russian women, and you will soon see its good effects—they are old before their time. As iron glowing hot is tempered by being plunged into water, so, the advocates for Russian bathing assert, is the body hardened by the process just described. But so far from the sudden transition helping to temper the frame, and render it more fit to stand the cold of winter, experience shows that it only makes it *more sensitive*. The peasant may not wear much dress in winter, because he cannot afford it, but he puts on all he can get; while his master, as every body knows, *burdens* himself with coverings.

Those who think the Russians hardy, because they make long journeys through the snow, forget how a Russian travels: he is built up in a close machine, buried among beds and blankets enough for a whole household. The only hardy people in Russia are the lowest of the peasants and soldiers, who, from constant exposure, become nearly frost-proof. A Russian gentleman is not half so hardy as an Englishman. It is notorious that the English, though brought up in so mild a climate, when they come here, endure the terrible cold of Russia —a cold intense, beyond all our ideas of winter— much better than the Russians themselves. A Russian nobleman who had an English tutor in his family, told us that when he himself could scarcely cross the threshold, even in his loads of fur and wool, his friend was frisking happily about, with nothing but a light great-coat added to his usual dress, and tantalizing him every time they met, by telling him that it was a fine day—a *very* fine day! And so it is with all Englishmen on first arriving here—but only *at first;* for, after they have had a year or two of the bath, to which they become as much addicted as the Russians, they are forced to wear as many wrappings as their neighbours. That the bath has an enervating influence, is evident from the habits of Russians, even in the milder climates of France and Italy, where they may be seen in

their furs, when the natives are satisfied with their ordinary dress. In short, their early and constant use of the bath is as injurious to the *body* as it is to the MORALS of the Russians; but on this latter subject we do not deem it expedient to enter.

Neither is the bath such a promoter of cleanliness as some allege. Those who pretend that the Russian gets such a scrubbing every week as the Englishman does not get in his whole life, thereby insinuating that the former is more cleanly than the latter, forget that his weekly bath is an excuse with the Russian for indulging in the greatest habitual filthiness. The Englishman, who employs soap and water so copiously as to surprise the hydrophobic nations of the continent, and is satisfied with a *moderate* use of the ordinary bath, is the only clean and cleanly animal in the world.

There is still another place, however, which the stranger ought to visit, and often, if he wish to become acquainted with the manners of the people: —the BAZAAR or *Gostinoï Dvor*, where the Russian shopkeepers are seen in the greatest perfection.

In their long beards, blue robes, and lofty caps, the tenants of this singular mart might pass for Jews; but they are all genuine unadulterated Russkys. The place our friends have to operate in is a vast square, with arcades opening to the numerous streets, and alleys dividing it at different points,

all occupied by small shops, some for jewellery, some for cutlery, with others for army-clothiers, grocers, stationers, upholsterers, mercers, &c. In short, there is a little, or rather a large town of shops here, which it would take a day to explore. Some of the neighbouring streets are also filled with shops. A journey through this place is sooner described than made. Some days the merchants are very quiet, each merely opening his door, and bowing most winningly to tempt the stranger in. At other times, when, from seeing him repeat his visits, they begin to think something may be made of the stranger, he is beset with importunate shopmen the moment he appears. A bearded fellow thrusts himself in your way, and launches forth in an harangue about the quality of his goods. But lo! another has scented the prey from afar. You are too respectable a customer to be given up without a struggle. Fortunately, they soon begin to fight with each other, and you escape in the storm of winged words. Sometimes, however, a man in the fervour of his importunity actually lays violent hands upon you, till it becomes impossible to escape without leaving the skirt of your polluted garment, as a trophy of his zeal.

Should you be wiled into any shop, be sure that at least double the value is asked for every article. This disposition of the Russians to ask too much

for every thing, imposes caution on the stranger who would bargain with them. It is this well-known part of their character, that has made so many pronounce them a nation of rogues and sharpers. They evidently have no pleasure in selling an article without first having a fight about it. We had many instances of this, but none more striking than that with a hawker, who had waited on a gentleman at our lodgings with a bundle of those velvet dressing-gowns, of which it is now the fashion for every stranger to carry home some. After disposing of a few of the larger ones, there was still question about a smaller one, for which thirty roubles were asked and twenty offered. Day after day the Russian came to see whether more would be given, but in vain; the customer knew that he had offered the full value, and would be sure to get it at last. For a time the importunate merchant was not seen; but the very morning of the stranger's departure, the first man he saw in the street was his friend of the dressing-gown, hastening, when he heard of the intended flight, to offer him the disputed article at his own, or at any price. The rule of the Russian merchant is, never to lose a customer for the shame of being thought a rogue: rather than let him go, he will give the article for any thing that has been offered. At one of the shops a pair of shoes, for which eleven rou-

bles were first asked, were finally given for three and a half.

Of all the surrounding bazaars in the vicinity of the large one, the *Marché aux poux*, or Old-Clothes Market, is by far the most amusing. The ragged store displayed here is as undefinable as the crowd In no other part of St. Petersburg have we seen so many women of the lower classes assembled; some pricing a petticoat of ancient date, some buying a gown with as many holes as spots, and some carrying off a shift, of which one half is bidding adieu to the other. Here a posse of soldiers are holding a council of war over a pair of superannuated trousers; a little further on a poor bargeman is sighing over the departed glories of a moth-eaten sheepskin. There is no finery here. In the old-clothes marts of other capitals, many a gaudy sight may be seen; silks, ribbons, and frippery, once as gay as life, which they now seem to mock; but, in the St. Petersburg fair, misery is misery: it comes to this market in rags, undisguised, unpretending, and finds nothing but rags to cover it.

The market for old iron, near this, is also worthy of a glance. Such a collection of rusty articles was never made before, since iron was first dug from the mine; old nails, old screws, old hammers, hinges, anchors,—old things of all kinds that ever

iron was used for. The only puzzle is to find names and uses for half of them.

But the reader must now be wearied of our walks through St. Petersburg, and perhaps of the low company we have been keeping. If he ask why we have all this time said so little of the well-dressed throng, we would tell him that the manners and appearance of the better classes being now pretty much the same in every country, he who would form a correct idea of the national character of a people must, while amongst them, forsake at times the drawing-rooms of the great, and visit the market, the workshop, the kennêl, the place of every day as well as that of holiday resort. Unless he follow this plan, he might as well have stayed at home. Travelling will teach him nothing new; show him nothing to remember.

To please the fastidious, however, we shall take a turn as far as the celebrated Summer Garden. There is no vulgarity here; the ladies are all in satin shoes, and the beaux in kid gloves. There are flowers to sweeten the air after the musty places we have been in; long alleys of trees to keep away the sun, and a goodly assemblage of statues to honour us with their silent admiration. In fact, for those who prefer such places to the haunts we have been wandering through, this is a most appropriate retreat. The handsome iron

railing towards the river, regarded as one of the finest things of the kind in Europe, most effectually excludes the vulgar. But, for our own parts—there is no accounting for taste—in place of sauntering through the throng of affectation and pretence generally assembled here, we should prefer visiting these gardens on the famous fête of the 26th of May,—when the girls of the middle classes are brought out to catch husbands.

This is one of the most singular usages we have ever met with. The Russians call it the *Inspection* or *Show of young Girls.* Regularly as the first days of summer return, all the young women who have not got husbands are paraded here by their parents, each in her best dress and best looks. Bachelors, young and old, enter the alleys, with cautious step and anxious eye—glide in silence through the files of beauty ranged thick on each side—see some one whom they like better than others—stand a while—go away—come back—and take another look; then, if the honoured fair one still please, the victim ends by making proposals. To whom? To the young lady to be sure, guesses some impatient youth—but he guesses wrong. Such indelicacy is never heard of in Russia. A man to make love for himself would be contrary to nature; that is, to Russian nature, which is quite a different thing from human nature

every where else. It is to the parents, then, that he addresses himself? No such thing! The unhappy reader is still wide of the mark. They manage these things very differently in Russia. A gentleman who intends taking a wife, employs some old hag from a class of women who live by match-making. He tells her what funds he has, what he is employed in, what he expects from his friends; and, naming the fair one whom his eyes have chosen, begs that she will explain all these matters, not to *her*, but to her family. This go-between, this most unclassical Proxenete, whose wages are as regularly fixed as the per-centages of a broker, enters on her mission in due form. Explanations are given on both sides; friends are consulted; negotiations of the most formal nature are carried on. Diplomacy is nothing to it. From unforeseen objections about prospects or dowery, the explanations of the high contracting parties often become as tedious as Belgian protocols. Months, in fact, may be spent on these preliminaries; but all this time the poor damsel has had no voice in the matter. She has not seen her intended; they have never met so long as to whisper a stolen vow to each other. There will be time enough for the unimportant process of becoming acquainted, when their fate has been irrevocably fixed. What have such silly considera-

tions as like or dislike to do with marriage? In choosing a wife, it is a beast of burden, a domestic drudge, that the Russian wants, not a rational companion—an equal. Were he to consult his affections in selecting his spouse, could he have the pleasure of beating her whenever he feels inclined?

Married women in the middle ranks appear to lead a most listless existence. Without education, and, by the jealous usages of the country, almost prohibited from taking exercise, their chief occupation seems to consist in leaning over the window all day long, with their elbows resting on cushions, and sometimes a poodle dog on each side.

We have now done with the vulgar of St. Petersburg. The title of next chapter challenges the reader to higher game.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HIGHER CLASSES; THEIR INCOMES AND MUNIFICENCE; EMPEROR'S TREATMENT OF TRAVELLING BEAUTIES; ABUSE OF SOME TITLES.

Witty account of the Russian capital—Difference between the Russian and English nobility—A man valued by the number of his serfs—Sources of income in Russia—Land—Manufactures—Mines—Flocks—Large fortunes—The Cheremetieffs—Demidoffs, &c.—The Countess R—— and her sheep—Extent of Russian properties—Compared with that of a Scottish estate—The wealthy Count Woronzoff—His munificence—Anecdote of him—Nobles not allowed to spend too much of their fortunes abroad—Russian ladies marrying foreigners — Intimacy between Russian and English gentlemen—Style of dressing—Abuse of the title of "Prince"—Hundreds bearing it—Abundance of "Generals"—The apothecary made a General—Privileges of a uniform—Use of epaulettes—Edinburgh Archer—Disputes about precedence rendered impossible.

P—L L——N's saying about St. Petersburg is worthy of being recorded. When asked what he thought of his native capital, he replied, with true Russian contempt for every thing Russian, and with a depth of discrimination worthy of one who had graduated in the Exclusive and Brummell

schools of England, "There are but two places in the world where a man can live—London and Paris. St. Petersburg is but a large country-village."

This (though not quite new) was excellent, to be said of a place with 400,000 inhabitants. But there was truth as well as wit in the response of the youthful philosopher. In spite of all its splendour and extent, St. Petersburg is but a village. Of mere bulk, wealth, population, it has enough; but it wants the indescribable something which makes the capitals of France and England the capitals also of the intellect and fashion of Europe.

This assertion would be amply confirmed by a sketch of the state of society here; but this task must be left to more experienced pens; *we* had neither time nor opportunity to become acquainted with more than its surface. It is here proposed to mention merely a few general facts, not so much with the view of giving a complete picture of the better classes, as to show some of the differences between them and those of England.

In England, a man's worth depends on the number of pounds sterling which he has of yearly income; but in Russia, the question that decides the degree of estimation in which a man shall be held, is, "How many slaves have you?" The number of these once known, the person's value

is easily turned into money. Thus, in ordinary hands, each peasant is worth so many roubles a year; you have but to multiply by that standard, and in a trice you have the annual income. There is always a wide additional allowance made, however, above the strict sum, on the complimentary supposition that the party in question is skilful at grinding the poor wretches, and so will extort a good deal more than an ordinary person. Happy he, then, who can boast of his thousands of slaves; he is the envied, the courted, the successful; while the man who has few is as little thought of as a country curate or a younger son. "I have no slaves," said a nobleman of our acquaintance from the German frontier, to a Russian prince, who had been paying him great attention since his arrival in the capital; "slaves are unknown in my country." The look of contempt from his interrogator could not have been more cutting, had he said "I am a slave myself." From that night he was never taken the least notice of by his princely host. Who would ask to his balls or his dinners "a man of nothing," who not only had no slaves, but also wanted tact to conceal his forlorn condition?

There are some families, such as the Cheremetieffs and Stroganoffs, who possess between forty and fifty thousand serfs. One hundred thousand

is the largest number we ever heard ascribed to one family. These, however, are the most colossal fortunes. Even one thousand is looked upon as a very respectable share; the man who can boast of this round number is *somebody*. We never heard any estimate of the average value of each slave, but were told that a household of the most ordinary kind may bring about 100 roubles (4*l*.) a year. The household of a serf occupying a farm, is of course worth a great deal more to the proprietor; so that, taking the average of the two classes of serfs together, the annual worth of each family may be calculated at 5*l*. of our money; which, allowing six persons to each household, and, consequently, dividing the whole population on his estate by that number, would give the income of a nobleman possessing one thousand serfs, as approaching to 840*l*. a year.

In addition to their income from this source, many of the wealthiest families possess large revenues from manufactories of various kinds. Not a few, also, draw immense sums from their mines. The name of Demidoff, so long an object of interest to the travelling crowd in Italy, will at once be recalled, in connexion with the branch last named. This family is one of the newest in the empire; little more than a hundred years ago its founder was but a poor blacksmith. Peter the

Great, being highly pleased with some muskets, halberds, and other weapons, which he had executed in a way very superior to any which had hitherto been made in Russia, gave his humble friend a grant of land near Moscow; thereby enabling him to establish forges on an extensive scale. These succeeded so well, that he soon after was presented with large territories in Siberia, the iron and other mines of which continue so productive, that the family now enjoys revenues equal to those of the highest among the English nobility. Their platina mines are the most valuable known in the world. So abundantly have jewels been found on some parts of their property, that on the nights when the old count used to receive company in Florence, it was no uncommon thing to see gems on his tables to the value of 400,000*l.*

Some families in the south of Russia draw immense revenues from their lands and flocks. The Countess R——, whose estates we traversed near Pultava, possesses 60,000 merino sheep, and 100,000 deciatines of land, which make about 270,000 imperial acres, or very nearly the size of the county of Radnor (272,640 acres). The countess has been long abroad, but has recently got a hint (the emperor's hints are somewhat peremptory) to return and look after her sheep.

Large, however, as her property is, it does not come near that of the territories of some of the Scottish nobility—for it would be unjust to compare Russian estates with the compact and highly-cultivated properties of English landowners. The property of the Dukes of Gordon, for example, in the counties of Banff, Moray, Aberdeen, and Inverness, covered 422,000 acres, or 22,000 acres more than the whole county of Hertford. If to this be added the estates to which they succeeded on the Dee, they will be found to have possessed in all considerably more than 550,000 acres, or *three times* the size of the county of Middlesex (179,590 acres). The estates of the Duchess-Countess of Sutherland, in Scotland, also surpass in extent those of the great families of Russia.

While speaking of the more wealthy of the Russian nobles, we must not omit Count Woronzoff, the most popular man in Russia, and the master of revenues that would entitle him to rank with some of the crowned heads of Germany; his paternal income having been greatly increased by the large fortune of his wife. At Odessa, where he resides as governor of New Russia, he maintains all the splendour, without the constraint, of a court. When he visits the Crimea, he daily entertains some hundreds at his table; and he is

building a palace near Sebastopol, which will cost 300,000*l.*

While he was commander of the Russian armies in France, the officers, as Russian officers always do, lived so extravagantly, that, when the army was about to be withdrawn, bills were brought against them to a much greater amount than they were able to discharge. The count heard of the business; but the sum was so great that it startled him. The honour of Russia, however, was at stake: to leave a foreign country with such claims unsatisfied, would for ever stamp the national character with infamy. There was no alternative but at once to give an order on the military chest for the whole amount.

He reached St. Petersburg, expecting a cordial reception from Alexander and his ministers; but was disappointed. For a time there was nothing but coldness. He had not yet seen the emperor; but at last was sent for, and a hint given that he had exceeded his powers, in making such an unprecedented use of the public money. His answer was worthy of a Roman: "I thought to please your majesty by saving the honour of Russia: I calculated wrong; but atone for the error by this scrap of paper. My banker will refund the whole amount to the Minister of Finance." It was an order for 50,000*l.*

A man capable of making such a sacrifice, could not long continue a favourite at court. His character, however, was too highly appreciated by the country at large—and especially by the army—to enable the government to dispense with him altogether. They were at last compelled to give him *carte blanche*, in order to keep his friendship; and his answer was, that they must either give him his present government, or nothing. He has since been offered that of Moscow, as of higher rank, but declined it.

The character of the count is interesting to Englishmen, from the circumstance that he is himself nearly half English. Besides having a sister married to an English nobleman, he spent the best part of his youth amongst us, at one of our public schools; and is thus as well acquainted with England, as any peer of the realm. The conduct we have related does no discredit to his training.

Another instance of his munificence occurred on a more recent occasion. Knowing that the true way to prevent peculation in government offices, is to pay respectably those employed in them, he annually distributes the whole of his salary as Governor-General (50,000 roubles, or 2000*l.*) among the secretaries and clerks employed under him. The count having had occasion to visit England a few years

since, a substitute was appointed till his return, who drew all the emoluments of the office, but being of limited fortune, was not able to show the same liberality to his subordinates. This diminution of income occasioned great embarrassment to those who had hitherto trusted to their patron's bounty; but no sooner did the count hear of the circumstance, than he generously ordered that the usual amount should be paid to each out of his private fortune, in order that none connected with him might suffer even a temporary inconvenience by his absence.*

The emperor takes good care, however, that the fortunes of his subjects shall not be all spent abroad. No Russian is allowed to remain more than five years in foreign countries;—so that the empire does not suffer to any perceptible extent from the system of absenteeism which oppresses England. It is also free from another English affliction: ladies of fortune are not allowed to marry foreigners; at least, if they do so, they must

* No one who knows any thing of the beautiful "system" in Russia, will be surprised to hear that, since the above remarks on Count Woronzoff's character were written, he has fallen under the emperor's displeasure, and is now on a visit in England. There are countries where it is dangerous to be honest! It also appears, from statements in the German newspapers, published while these pages are passing through the press, that the whole of his secretaries and clerks have been dismissed from the public employment.

bring their captive knights *to live in Russia.* This is a practical lesson which we might take with much advantage from that country. The Englishwomen whom we see wedding themselves to misery in France and Italy, would be more cautious in their choice, were they compelled to bring Monsieur Le Comte, or Il Signor Marchese, home amongst their English friends. They now throw themselves away, on the principle that so long as they remain among strangers, there is none to reproach them with their folly; and, when the worst comes, they know that heart-break and shame will be less galling, where no friend of happier years is by, to remind them of what they were and might still have been. A little of the Russian discipline would most effectually prevent all this.

The gallant emperor, we have said, has too tender a regard for his fair subjects, to leave them entirely to their own discretion; and, as an example of it, we may state that, the other day, when the wealthy Countess S——— wished to give her hand to Prince Butera, a Neapolitan nobleman, formerly well known as a member of the diplomatic corps at Paris, the answer of her imperial guardian was, —"I have no objection to the match, but the prince must live in Russia;"—which his excellency very wisely consented to do. The king of Naples has also gained by the bargain; the prince, in

return for the honour of being nominated his majesty's permanent ambassador, having agreed to discharge the duties of the office without any salary.

It is a singular fact, that, notwithstanding the extreme difference between the institutions of Russia and those of England, there are no foreigners with whom Englishmen associate more cordially than with Russians. In liberality, indifference about expense, and readiness to make a sacrifice for their friend, they come nearer to ourselves than any other of the continental nations. They are the only body of men abroad to whom our term "gentlemanly" can be applied.

Without diving for profound reasons to account for this favourable feeling on the part of the English, we may state one which, though by no means of a very deep nature, is yet not without its weight with Englishmen—namely, that, generally speaking, the Russian nobles are the best-dressed men of the whole continent. The Germans and French are over-dressed; the Italians—except the few who dance attendance on the English families at Florence and Naples—don't dress at all; but the Russians keep a happy medium, dressing in a plain manly style, like people of sense at home. Even the clerks in public offices are noticeable in this respect.

Having fallen on the subject of dress, we ought to state, once for all, before leaving it, that the Russian ladies wear the last month's Parisian fashions, but always exaggerated. For instance, their *bustles*—or whatever else those mysterious structures ought to be termed—are large enough for camels to dance upon.

We were amused, and, at first, greatly puzzled, with the frequency of the title of "prince." Every second carriage we met was that of Prince somebody or other. We soon began to find out, however, that to be a prince here, is no great distinction. Though many wealthy people enjoy it, the title is often held by those who are distinguished by little else than this "handle" to their name. It is nothing more than the mistranslation of a Tartar word. All who bear it are of that race, and it is assumed by every member of any family in which it has been transmitted. The original term was certainly descriptive of some kind of rank, but had a meaning very different from the idea we attach to its substitute. "To be a prince in Russia," said a friend, "is scarcely reputable. For one rich man who bears the title, there are thousands who have it in beggary. In some towns—Odessa, for instance—you may see princes at every door, without a rouble in their pockets."

In this way, one meets with twenty Prince M.'s and Prince P.'s, before falling on the right one. "Prince Galitzin is to be of the party where you dine to-night," was an announcement which overjoyed us; for we had heard much good of him many-a-day since in Paris, and anticipated much information and pleasure from his company. But it was not *the* prince; our prince turned out to be an *employé* in some government office.

Owing, probably, to its vulgarity, "prince" is not known as a title in the imperial family: the sons and brothers of the emperor have the title of "grand-duke;" which is the more distinguished from the fact, that here no subject ever bears the title of "duke."

There is another distinction, however, whose frequency puzzled us nearly as much as that now spoken of—that of "general." We had heard several people, distinguished neither by warlike looks nor warlike dress, spoken of as generals. One man, in particular, quite routed our philosophy—a shabby little creature, with scarcely bone enough to carry a sword, far less to wield it, was always addressed as *Monsieur le General;* but still, as the young officers who were of the party treated him with very little deference, we could reconcile neither his bearing nor their conduct with our English ideas of the dignity to be expected from

a man addressed by such a high military appellation, and of the respect due to him from juniors in the service. At length the mystery was cleared up: the poor old man was a director of some theatre, and held the title by gift of the emperor, as many do without ever having been in the army. If we mistake not, it may be purchased; at all events, it is lavished in a way which makes it perfectly worthless, when not coupled with military rank. We heard of an apothecary, who is a general; and, for all we know to the contrary, the empress's man-midwife may be a lieutenant-colonel. In short, these military honours are distributed with a freedom truly ridiculous. Russians themselves smile at it. Among the lower orders, however, these things, with their accompanying ribbons, excite great awe.

This circumstance of military rank commanding so much reverence, will explain why a penniless lieutenant, with nothing but his epaulettes, will get horses at the post when he is travelling, without a moment's delay, when a merchant who has thousands must wait for hours. The respect paid to a uniform is, in fact, so great, that we have heard of travellers pinning a bunch of gold-lace to their shoulders, in order to strike awe into the post-masters and servants, the latter of whom are

kicked and driven about in grand style by the gentlemen in *real* military dress. Some foreigners have found it advisable to sport epaulettes even in the capital, as well as in travelling. A gentleman who was connected with the English embassy, during our visit to St. Petersburg, finding that in his visits with Lord Durham to the camp, he was sometimes treated with less respect than others of his standing, began to meditate how he might best remedy the evil. His case seemed a desperate one, for he had never served even in the militia, as other diplomatists have done, nor could he assume the handsome uniform of a deputy-lieutenant. But at length he happily bethought himself that he was a member of the Scottish Archers' Club, whose uniform, with a little aid from lace, &c., can be made warlike enough to impose on a Russian sentinel. This accordingly he resolved to sport, and ever after, on public occasions, in going to court or camp, it procured him all the honours of a British general.

To the *first* class of nobility very few belong; perhaps only two, one of whom is Prince Paskevitch, who humbled the Persians, and is now helping to keep the Poles enslaved. Very singularly, some of the orders have *no members:* thus, of the eleventh and thirteenth, none are alive. Though

titles are hereditary, there is no *rank*, except what the emperor confers. A man may be prince or count by birth, yet a general of the emperor's creation takes precedence before him: he has a title, but no rank. The classes of nobility in Russia are singularly numerous—in all, fourteen!

At one time, the Russian nobles were exposed to continual feuds among themselves, about place, precedence, &c., in consequence of some ancient usages comprehended under the general name of *mestnichestvo*, "*placeship*;" but the Tzar Fœdor Alexeïevitch, who possessed such extraordinary talents for governing, that, had he lived, he might have done even greater things for Russia than his brother and successor, Peter the Great, put an end to these disputes by a very ingenious and summary proceeding. Having assembled all the nobles and boyars at Moscow, he made an harangue, setting forth the evils that had arisen to the empire from their dangerous quarrels; he then committed to the flames in their presence, the whole of the *razriad*, or "arrangement," which was a roll containing the titles and facts on which each family founded its pretensions. It was impossible for them to fight about claims of which no evidence was any longer in existence. Before this time, no member

of an ancient family could be put under the command of one belonging to a family which stood lower on the roll; but now all the nobles are equal, none having any privileges beyond those which are common to the whole order.

CHAPTER XVII.

AMUSEMENTS OF THE NOBLES—PASSION FOR TRAVEL —TASTE FOR LANGUAGES.

Russians seldom ride—Rural sports unknown—Fond of gambling —The theatre—The emperor and his dancers — Passion for travel—Difference between English and Russian travellers— English travelling inconsistencies—Russians not devoid of patriotism—Their quickness in acquiring languages—Apathy of the English in this study—The Englishman and his Italian master— —His German professor—Russians very attentive to their native tongue.

The Russian nobility have none of that taste for out-of-door exercises, which constitute so large a share of the amusements of the higher classes in England. In winter, they have abundance of sledge-driving; but in summer, if they come out at all, it is in their carriages. We saw only one lady on horseback all the time we were here; and even the gentlemen are rarely seen riding, compared with those of other countries. In little Berlin, where the passion for this kind of exercise

is carried farther than in any other continental capital, more fine riding-horses may be seen in a day, than the large St. Petersburg will turn out in a week. We scarcely recollect seeing so much as a servant mounted, during the whole of our journey in the interior, and certainly not one gentleman after leaving Moscow.

Rural sports are unknown. They wonder what pleasure a nobleman can have in trudging out to shoot partridges, or stalk red-deer. They leave such pursuits to the men whom they can scourge if the larder be ill-supplied. In fact, "country amusements"—a phrase which calls up so many delightful images to the Englishman—has no place in the Russian vocabulary.

The want of all taste of this kind accounts for many peculiarities in the character and habits of the Russians. Having no occupations of an active kind, they fill up their time with sensual and pernicious amusements. Instead of spending their forenoons among books, in the fields, or in visiting their neighbours, they waste day after day in gambling. This vice is fatal to many of them. Nowhere does it exist in such violence, or to such a ruinous extent, as here. In the army, officers make it almost their constant occupation. Even in other countries, a Russian may always be recognised by his passion for play.

The drama is in great favour with the higher ranks, as is well shown by the many large and handsome theatres scattered through the capital. The opera, both Italian and German, is always well frequented. The ballet corps is said to be scarcely inferior to that of Vienna. We mention these things, however, chiefly as giving an opportunity for reminding the reader that, in foreign countries, such frivolities are looked upon as matters of the very utmost importance. In England, happily, they are left to the few; on the continent they engross the thoughts and the time of all. Even the old King of Prussia occupies himself about the movements of a ballet, as anxiously as about those of an army; and, will it be believed that here the emperor, who finds time for every thing, has actually been at immense pains in drilling the public dancers,—having condescended to give instructions himself to the leaders of the female regiment in the *Revolt of the Seraglio.* He is frequently behind the scenes, and always visits the stage between the acts.

The larger theatres being shut for repairs, as twenty other places were, during the greater part of our stay, we had no opportunity of seeing any but the *Michaelofski* theatre, which is quite new, and one of the handsomest theatres we have ever seen. The arrangement is entirely different from

that of all other similar places that we are acquainted with; the greater part of the pit being occupied by rows of handsome arm-chairs, while a few ranges of seats covered with red velvet cushions sweep round the edge. The whole is so clean and well-arranged, that the pit looks more like a private drawing-room than a place of indiscriminate resort. Part of the conduct of the audience, however, did not exactly accord with our ideas of drawing-room behaviour: we allude to the proceedings of the young officers present, who amused us by the assiduity which they displayed in dressing their hair before the audience; each, on entering, took out his pocket-comb, and plied it most vigorously.*

There are so few associations of a pleasant or romantic nature to link Russians with home, that we cannot wonder at the great love which they have for foreign travel. Three months of sunshine to nine of snow would justify any man for longing after other lands. Let a Russian wander where he may, every change is for the better.

* Admission to these places is so dear, that none but respectable people can attend. A ticket to the boxes at the summer French theatre, in the Kammennoï-Ostroff, costs 30 roubles (near 25 shillings); and at the Alexandra theatre, which was open before we left, the prices are said to be as long as the titles of the *Königlich-grossbrittanisch-Hannöverische Kammersängerin*, who was delighting the public as the Countess, in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*.

The English have the travelling mania as well as the Russians; yet in nothing is the difference between their characters more strikingly seen than in this point of seeming resemblance; for no two nations differ more widely in their conduct when abroad. The Russian travels to forget, the Englishman to be reminded of, his native country. At every step the Russian finds something *better* than in Russia; the Englishman, at every hour, meets something which he pronounces *worse* than ever was seen in England. The Russian courts the society of foreigners, and for the moment adopts entirely the manners of the country he is in; an Englishman frequents only his own countrymen, and prides himself in keeping up his national habits. The Russian is delighted with all he sees—has never beheld any thing equal to it; an Englishman abuses all that surrounds him in his new element;—scenery, palaces, women,—earth, and sky,—are nothing to those at home.

"How delightful this French cooking is!" exclaims the long-named fur-merchant who never left the Neva before. "Who would live in a country where a man can't get even a slice of decent toast?" says plain John from Whitechapel.

"What charming things these French beds are!" sighs the one. "What monsters!" roars the other: "they actually are not ashamed to say that

they never saw a four-posted bed in their lives! I've slept all my life in a four-posted bed, and shan't at this time o' day put my head into a cat's cradle to please any man. Mind, landlord, I'm off—I won't stay another night in your house unless you get a f–o–u–r-post bed."

Or, taking a higher sphere of society: "What a delightful place this Paris is!" says my lady countess: "what gloves, what lace, what every thing compared with our vile St. Petersburg!" "It is impossible to live in this horrid France," exclaims her English friend; "I'm quite sure they send all their good gloves and slippers to London, for here I never get one to stay on—they can't so much as make a pin that will hold five minutes!"

A Russian surrounds himself with every thing that can make him forget home; an Englishman is miserable unless every thing about him be from his own country. English politics, English fashions, English quarrels, and English scandal, are as abundant in the *Cascine* at Florence, as in the Pump-room at Bath. The Englishman literally "drags at each remove a lengthening chain;" the farther away from his home, the more he thinks of it; but his northern friend never recalls his, except as the country whence he derives his income, —till the emperor's order too significantly admonishes him that he is a Russian. In all this he de-

serves at least the palm of consistency: he spends as much as possible of his time abroad, because he thinks every country better than Russia. The Englishman also stays years away, but all the time his heart is in England—there is no land like his own.

On this head, it will be seen, we differ entirely from the gallant marquis who has lately favoured the public with his interesting "*Recollections of a Tour in the North of Europe.*" He therein states that all with whom he conversed, appeared to "have a very great disinclination to the conquest of new dominions;" and from thence infers, that it is unjust to accuse the nobles of being so passionately fond of other countries. But was his lordship—the fêted of the court, the *friend* of the emperor—in the best position for hearing the *real* sentiments of those with whom he mingled? The Russian nobles know when to speak and when to hold their tongue. They have more tact than to have rudely disturbed the noble stranger's dream of admiration. It would soon be seen that the emperor had resolved to send his English guest away with the most favourable impression of all things Russian; and every courtier would therefore vie with his neighbour in the struggle who should best deserve the emperor's smiles. Not one murmur against the existing order of things—not even one little sigh for a

more genial clime, would be heard from the well-disciplined throng that fluttered round him. Plain speaking has never been proverbial for haunting courts; and of all the courts in Europe, that of St. Petersburg is the last where it will seek to intrude.

In making these remarks it is by no means intended to throw any suspicion on the fidelity of the Marquis of Londonderry's statements. On the contrary, we are persuaded that he has most faithfully represented all that came under his notice. What we mean is, that he was in the very worst possible position for learning the real state of public opinion among the nobles. His intimacy with the emperor, we repeat, would of itself be sufficient to give a false tone to the representations of all who opened their lips to him.

Let it not be thought, however, that we accuse the Russians of want of patriotism. It is what we may term the *physical* disadvantages of Russia that make them roam so fondly to more favoured climes. Their affection for their country may not be of the same warm kind as ours, but that they have patriotism, in the truest sense of the word, was well manifested at the time of Napoleon's invasion. In other parts of Europe he too often found willing tools among the native nobles. In Germany, how many were forward to betray their country—how readily did the needy

flock round him! But it should for ever be remembered, to the honour of the Russians, that when the conqueror of Europe came amongst them, not one joined him, or bade him welcome.

But, to resume our contrast. An Englishman looks forward to travelling, if he think of it at all, as something he must go through some day or other, not from choice, but from necessity—the dire necessity, namely, of being *like other people*. If it were not the *fashion*, the great mass of our wandering countrymen would stay at home. Not so with the Russian: from the first hour that he can think for himself, a journey abroad is the great theme of his thoughts. His early life is a constant course of preparation for it. He begins with languages, and having his heart in the study, advances to a proficiency truly surprising. The young Russian knows what he is to do with his French or Italian, and therefore acquires them rapidly; an Englishman sees no advantage in such acquirements; cannot imagine what possible use there is in tormenting himself with any modern tongue but his own, and therefore never retains what his master attempts to cram him with. When reminded that foreign languages, if they gain no other advantage, will at least be useful in foreign countries, he replies that it will be time enough to think of them when the evil is unavoid-

able—that is, when actually in those countries. But before he has made up his mind to go abroad, he is too old, or too indolent, to learn one word of a new tongue. It is therefore the rarest thing possible to meet an Englishman who can speak a foreign language decently; his courier saves him the trouble; picking his pocket too so politely, that he is in perfect amazement at "that man's economy."

The aversion of the English to study foreign languages, even when abroad, is now so well known in every country they go to, that each nation has some standing joke against us on the subject. The people of Rome, for instance, take great delight in telling of an Englishman who hired a master to teach him Italian, but soon found it so troublesome, that he always took care not to be out of bed when the punctual professor came at ten for the lesson, and never acquired more of the language, than just enough to be able to drawl from his pillow, "*Doppo-domani, alle undeci,*" "The day after to-morrow, at eleven;" which was sure to be repeated every time the intrusive tap was heard.

The Germans improve on this, or at least on a fact which actually happened to an accomplished theologian, now filling one of the highest chairs in Prussia. A young Englishman of fortune,

staying at Berlin, engaged him for lessons in German. For a day or two a yawning attention was paid to the matter in hand; but the *lessons* soon improved into *breakfasts*. "Cutlets and champagne to-day, Herr Professor," said the noble student, "*provided*——" The provision was, that he should not speak one word about German, nor in German. With a willing scholar, the Germans are the best language-masters in the world; but, with such a learner as this, and too many of our travellers are like him, who could blame the professor for doing as most of his countrymen do when they get hold of an English pupil—making him *teach* English, in place of *learning* German?

To this English indolence in acquiring foreign tongues, the Russians furnish a most complete contrast. They have been always famed for their facility in acquiring these; but we should think the secret lies fully as much in their methodical way of study, as in any superiority of mental endowments. The Englishman is by nature as highly gifted as the Russian: when he applies himself seriously to any language, there are few can keep pace with him. He may not pronounce so well as some foreigners, but he masters not only the vocabulary, but the spirit, of a language, more thoroughly than any competitor that can enter the

field with him. Foreign languages and foreign literature are much more accurately appreciated by English writers than ours are by foreigners. The number of English, however, who take this trouble is so small, that foreigners carry off all the merit as linguists; and none deserve a larger share of it than the Russians. The fact is, they begin at a very early age: it is no uncommon thing to find children at eight conversing in French, German, and Italian, with great fluency. As soon as they are able to speak, they are placed under foreign governesses, generally natives of Switzerland or Germany, and sometimes of France. With these, and with their parents, they speak foreign languages; with servants, they employ Russian. In some families, tutors from England may now be met with. But even in families which cannot go to the expense of employing foreigners, several languages are spoken by the children. They learn them at school; French and German being as much used as Russian in all respectable places of education.

Nor are the Russians distinguished merely by the number of languages which they possess; they are remarkable also for the correctness with which they pronounce every foreign tongue. Their own impracticable alphabet is of great use in this respect. Those who can pronounce the

elementary sounds of Russian, have already got over all the difficulties and delicacies in the pronunciation of every other European tongue.

Before leaving this subject, it may be mentioned that it is a mistake to suppose, as is generally done, that the Russians pay no attention to their own language. On the contrary, every person of rank not only learns his native tongue, when young, but continues to study it afterwards. He applies himself to it much more carefully than we do to ours. The fact of its not being yet in a state which would entitle it to be called a *fixed* language, renders its study very difficult even to them.

CHAPTER XVIII.

STYLE OF LIVING AMONG THE NOBLES.

Splendid mansions — Style of entertaining — March of French cookery— Arrangements of the table — Simplicity — Feast of flowers—Names of guests—Domestic unhappiness—Mercenary marriages—Russian love-making—Costly feasts.

MANY of the wealthiest of the Russian nobles reside constantly at Moscow; but the more ambitious are, of course, attracted to St. Petersburg by the court. Their mansions are large and splendid. Their style of living, in the capital, greatly resembles that of the higher ranks in other parts of Europe. In summer, however, they are not seen to advantage, many being absent on their estates. They have at all times been celebrated for their hospitality to strangers; and, as we have already said, still deserve the character.

Their entertainments, however, are no longer on the rude scale of indiscriminate hospitality described by some travellers. Extravagant feasts

are still given, as will be mentioned below; but it is more from their costliness, than by the number of guests invited, that they deserve to be thus characterized. So far as we had any opportunity of judging, the dinner at the table of a Russian nobleman is now little different from that of a nobleman in any other country. French cookery, like the French language, is fast overrunning the earth, levelling all national distinctions, and, doubtless, destroying all national prejudices. The professors of this popular branch of science are to be met with every where; every where, too, are their labours in behalf of humanity munificently rewarded. A *chef-de-cuisine*, who leaves Paris on the top of the Diligence, with nothing but his nightcap and saucepans, rolls back from Russia, as from England, in his own carriage, loaded with the tribute of grateful nations.

It may not be below the dignity of travellers to record, that we were struck with the extreme elegance of some of the Russian tables. Those who think that good taste is better displayed by simplicity than by profusion, instead of making the board groan beneath a load of vulgar eatables, have adopted the French method, which is spreading among ourselves, of having all large dishes carved at the sideboard; thus leaving the dinner-table free for a tasteful display of fruit, in gold

baskets, and vases of rich workmanship, intermixed with costly ice-pails and bouquets of roses. To prevent the starving guest from supposing that he is to dine on perfumes altogether, the soup—with which *pâtés* are generally handed round—is placed before the lady of the house; but no other dish is put on the table till the fish appears,—which is at a much later stage of the dinner, than English taste would approve. On the same principle of keeping the grosser operations connected with the table as much out of the way as possible, many have the kitchen detached from the mansion; there being merely a range of stoves near the servants' door of the dining-room, for keeping the dishes warm.

Some families have adopted the fashion of *marking* the place each guest is to occupy at table—with a slip of paper bearing his name laid on the destined plate. This practice, which is seldom seen elsewhere—except in Germany, at fashionable (!) three o'clock dinners, or formal supper parties, to which the old school still adhere—has nothing to recommend it. In place of the delightful ease of an English dinner-table, where every one drops into his place without the aid of the drill-sergeant, the guest has to hunt about for his name, and, after all, may have the pleasure of being danced half-a-dozen seats down by a footman telling you that this is *not* your name, and then

danced back again with the assurance that it *is* your name—the soup cooling all this time to a jelly, and those you wished to sit beside, exiled to Siberian distance.

Wines are dealt with pretty much as in England; the plainer ones on the table, to which the guests may help themselves; the finer brought round by the butler, when the host has invited you to join him. The old English privilege, now disappearing even in England, of asking ladies to take wine, is as much unknown in Russia, as in other parts of the continent. Drinking after dinner, except in bachelor parties, is happily unknown; both gentlemen and ladies escaping to the drawing-room as soon as coffee has been handed round.

With all his wealth, however—with all his passion for travelling, all his taste for languages, and all the elegance of his table—the Russian noble is still but half-civilized.* Such, at least, is the opinion of those who know him best. He puts on the

* We have seen this term applied by an able writer in *Blackwood*, to the Danes, Norwegians, and Swedes; but surely with little justice. These nations are as much entitled to be called "civilized" as ourselves. Of *wealth*, indeed, they have less than the English; but of *free institutions*, though differently modified, they can boast as well as England; while of *education*, taking the whole population, they display even a higher average than ourselves; and these certainly are good titles to all the honours of civilization, even when wealth is deficient.

dress and learns the manners of other European nations, but is infinitely behind them in all the qualities that constitute real refinement. This sentence may appear a harsh one, but it was still more harsh, as expressed to us by a gentleman who had studied them for years. "The Russian," said he, "has but the *exterior* of a civilized man: in *heart* he is both brutal and cruel—devoid of delicacy and feeling. Before strangers, he is smooth and plausible; in the bosom of his family, he is rough and tyrannical. For instance—the kindness and affection which a wife expects, and is entitled to, are seldom rendered by a Russian spouse. He treats her well before the world, because otherwise he would be reminding people that he is a Russian; but in private, harsh words—ay, and harsher *blows*—are often inflicted on his helpless mate."

Of the real truth of this charge, no stranger can know much; but we heard from a Russian himself, that he knew the practice of beating their wives to be extremely common among people of rank; while a foreign lady, who has been in the country, says, "that she *suspected* it in many cases, and *knew* that it was done, and cruelly, in several; one victim, of high rank, having often bared her arm and shoulder to show the too obvious marks of her husband's ferocity."

These remarks, of course, apply only to a class of families who seldom visit foreign countries. The Russian families whom we see gracing the courts of London and Paris, it should be known, are in every way exceptions to the great mass of the Russian nobility. They are the *élite* of the empire. Few travel, or are sent on diplomatic missions, except such as are distinguished by elegance of manners, as well as rank, and, above all, by self-command: in short, such as are most like the better classes of the rest of Europe, and consequently most unlike the bulk of their fellow nobles.

The mercenary, heartless way in which marriages are arranged among the great, may account for their domestic unhappiness. "A lover in Russia," said a Livonian nobleman, "must proceed very differently from what he would in Germany. A German maiden is to be won only through her *heart*: here this antiquated method would never do—for the excellent reason that a Russian woman *has no heart*. The admiring swain must address himself to her vanity, her envy, her desire to shine in society. She is as incapable of loving, as her husband. In fact, the passion of love, about which German and English novelists have blotted so much paper, is here altogether unknown. People marry solely for convenience—because their pa-

rents are pleased, their estates lie near each other, or their fortunes are suitable."

If this representation be true, who will wonder to hear of unhappy marriages, separations, and all their melancholy consequences? The transfer of a spouse by a husband of high rank, seems to be not unknown. A wealthy widow, whose name is familiar in the fashionable circles of western Europe, was originally married to one of the G—— family. But the second husband having offered her first lord 50,000 roubles (2000*l.*) to give her up, the transfer was speedily and amicably accomplished. Decency required a short retirement from the world, but, in due time, the lady appeared as the wife of one of the most powerful of the Russian nobles.

That their civilization is but half completed, is also proved by the tasteless splendour of the entertainments in which many indulge. They are not contented with what nature can furnish, but they must oppose nature. The finest fruits at the proper seasons are not enough for them: some display the rarest delicacies of the stove and the garden, in the months when art must help the season. Great sums are expended on hothouses, in order to produce grapes and other unseasonable rarities in winter. Cherries are to be seen at table in the month of February, at a guinea apiece.

Prince P——, who used to spend 1300*l.* on a single entertainment, was in the habit of surpassing this cherry-fête, by displaying plums, peaches, and apricots, at the expense of a couple of guineas for each piece. Little wonder, then, that he has now got rid of his troublesome wealth!

CHAPTER XIX.

NATIONAL DISHES.

Expensive fish—The *sterlet*—Foreign wines—Russian wines of the Don, the Crimea, &c.—*Kvass*, the national beverage—*Vodki*—Delicious tea—The horrors of eating *Batinia*—Buckwheat pudding—Russian broth—Hospitable matrons—Mushrooms—Their abundance and safety—Our poisonous kinds eaten in Russia—Mode of cooking—Suggestions—Is tallow eaten by the Russians?—*Tschi*, or cabbage-soup—*Sniatky*.

At the close of the last chapter the extravagance of the Russian nobles was referred to; and now, as specimens of it, we may mention a few of the favourite, and truly very expensive, dishes seen at their tables.

To begin with their favourite fish, the Sterlet (*Sturio ruthenus*). For one of these, not much larger than a good salmon, a nobleman, or even a merchant when he is giving a feast at his daughter's marriage, has been known to pay as much as twelve hundred roubles (50*l.*); three and four hundred roubles are not uncommon prices. On tasting this delicacy, we by no means found it so exquisite as to

justify this enormous price. It is a white fish, with a taste something between salmon and turbot, but not so good as either. It is generally served up whole, dressed with mushrooms and olives. The value would appear to be enhanced in some way or other not explained to us—probably by the expense of transporting them alive; for they are sold very cheap at the places where they are caught. They are very abundant in the Volga. The sea of Azoff also teems with them, and even in the Black Sea they are so abundant, that at Odessa they may be had for a shilling apiece. Some years they would appear to be dearer than others in the capital; for of the two which we saw alive in a tank in the Neva, the larger, about the size of a salmon in its first year, was offered for 175 roubles (7*l.*), and the smaller, like a sea-trout, for 75 roubles (3*l.*). This was called *uncommonly* cheap, but seven pounds sterling, for eight or nine pounds of fish, was no bad price. It seems to be a very lively fish. The back andhead, which are nearly black, are covered with diamond-shaped spots, the corners of which consist of hard prominent points.

The extravagance of the Russians in regard to WINES is also worthy of remark. Their own country produces wine, but it is a rule with a

Russian to care for nothing that can be got at home. You almost insult him to ask for a bottle of the wine of the Crimea, were it only to be able to say that you had drunk Russian wine in Russia. The government has been at great pains to encourage the culture of the vine in the South, but as yet with no decided success. Some of the wines of the Crimea are very tolerable, but the greater part of them are little better than red ink, with plenty of sugar in it.

In general they use nothing but French wines, and these of the most expensive quality; their predilection for *champagne* is well known. At home or abroad, the Russian is steady in his affection for this beverage; it is the only one which he seems to think fit for rational beings. Of the whole quantity annually exported from the departments of the Marne, Ardennes, &c., the Russians take 400,000 bottles;—which is only 6000 less than the quantity taken by England and her colonies, east and west. Yet, even after allowing Russia this fair proportion of the genuine wine, it remains a mystery where the rest can come from; a mystery which the wine-merchants alone can solve. As to its being genuine, the French song merrily settles the question, when it tells us that this precious wine has the power of multiplying itself; for, be-

sides what is used in France and other parts of the world, there is much more of it drunk in Russia alone, than ever grew in Champagne.

Nowhere are wines seen in greater perfection than at the house of a wealthy merchant. His rule when he gives a feast, especially if he live in the provinces, is to have part of *every thing costly.* Port, Sauterne, Champagne, gin, English porter, all follow each other in indiscriminating confusion, till the hospitable mistress of the feast puts an end to the dinner, by handing to each guest a glass of brandy, upon which you kiss her hand, and she salutes your cheek.

The wines of the Don still keep their ground against those of the Crimea; one kind, resembling Champagne, is excellent. Those called *Stanitze* and *Zimlyanskoye,* come very near Burgundy, both in colour and flavour; but the greatest favourite of all is the *Vinomarozka,* or frozen wine, made by mixing wine and brandy with the juice of berries peculiar to the districts about the mouth of the Don. The cultivation of the vine began there as long ago as Peter the Great's time; but of late more attention has been paid to it than formerly, government having ordered experiments to be made in the south, on no less than several hundred kinds of vine-slips from all parts of the world. Russians are

also sent to study the art of cultivating the vine in the best wine districts of France.

With all their partiality, however, for imported luxuries, there is another home-made liquor for which nothing can shake their love; and that is their Kvass. In vain have the English tempted them by establishing breweries for ale. Excellent though the ale be,—and it is the best we ever tasted out of England,—the Russians still keep by their national drink. This kvass is the thinnest, sourest, queerest kind of stuff ever concocted; yet the Russian could not live without it. It is patronised by all ranks and all denominations. There is a vessel of it in every peasant's hut, from which the family are sipping the whole day long; and you find it in bottles, on the same table with champagne. We met with it even in the public prisons; a large tin-vessel full of it, with a jug beside, being placed in every common room, for the prisoners to drink of at pleasure. The keeper told us they might as well deprive them of air at once as rob them of their kvass. It is made from rye boiled in a large quantity of water, which, being afterwards fermented, acquires a sourish taste, far from disagreeable, and most effectual in allaying thirst. It is of a yellowish colour, not unlike the barley-water of the sick-

room. There is a dear kind of it, sold in bottles at 6*d.* each, called white kvass, which is exceedingly good and brisk.

The VODKI, or brandy, in which the poor Russian indulges to such debasing excess, is a light-coloured spirit, not unlike the corn-brandy of Sweden, but more harsh and fiery. It is distilled chiefly from rye; but oats and barley are also employed. None but the lower classes use this spirit freely; for neither in their native country, nor elsewhere, have we ever found reason to look on the better class of Russians as addicted to the use of ardent spirits. If not altogether entitled to be called abstemious in this respect, they are certainly not so bad as the French, who indulge more freely than is generally supposed; and they are infinitely superior to the better class of Swedes, Norwegians, or Scotch. It is a melancholy fact, that the three most highly educated nations of Europe, should, at the same time, be the hardest drinkers.

Another favourite beverage must not be forgotten—their TEA. The Russians are the most inveterate tea-drinkers out of China; and with such excellent tea as they have, the passion is quite excusable.

Tea in Russia and tea in England are as different as peppermint-water and senna. With

us it is a dull, flavourless dose; in Russia it is a fresh invigorating draught. They account for the difference by stating that, as the sea-air injures tea, we get only the leaves, but none of the aroma of the plant, which left Canton; while they, on the other hand, receiving all their tea *overland*, have it just as good as when it left the celestial empire.* Be the cause what it may, there can be no doubt of the fact, that tea in Russia is infinitely superior to any ever found in other parts of Europe. Englishmen are taken by surprise on tasting it; even those who never cared for tea before, drink on during the whole of their stay in Russia. Like every thing else here, however, it is very expensive: the cheapest we saw even at Nishnei-Novgorod, which is the greatest mart in the empire, cost from 11 to 12 roubles (about 10 shillings) a pound; and when a bearded Russian wants to give a feast, he will pay as high as 50 roubles (*2l.*) for a pound of some high-flavoured kind of bohea. The difference between these and English prices, arises from the same cause as the difference in the quality—the long land-carriage, which is tedious and very expensive, through regions where there are neither roads nor resting-places.

* See Vol. II., chap. xv., where the Chinese bazaar is mentioned at Nishnei-Novgorod.

It should be stated, however, that, in travelling especially, *no* price will be thought too high for this, the only comfort of the wanderer in Russia. It banishes many a headach, and cheers under all the annoyances of a country which, by universal consent, is the most troublesome and fatiguing to travel in that can be visited. Tea may always be had at the inns in large towns, but being too dear an article for most of the country post-houses, every body should carry a stock for himself: we once paid 6*s.* 8*d.* for the tea necessary to make breakfast for four; but such a charge is rare.

The Russian seldom *eats* with his tea; he never adds cream to it like the English; nor does he disgust people by making tea-drinking an excuse for tippling, like the Germans, who half fill their cup with brandy when they can get it. The only thing the Muscovite mingles with his tea is sugar, and sometimes a thin slice of lemon; and these being duly added, he sips the brown draught, not from a *cup*, but from a common drinking-glass, slowly and seriously, with all the solemnity of a libation.

Now that we have fallen on the subject of national tastes, we must not forget to describe the most atrocious compound ever presented to man in the shape of food. It is the Russian soup called BATINIA, which to English palates tastes

worse than poison, but which these our allies, high and low of them, delight in as the greatest delicacy on earth. Hearing so much in its praise, we ventured once, and only once—for there is no fear of its being asked for a second time—to give a hint that we should like to make a trial of it. But,—"*O dura Russorum ilia!*"—the taste is not yet away from our lips, nor are we yet persuaded that the skin has returned to our throats.

A plateful of this yellow liquid—it ought not to be called soup—was placed before us, with a scum on its top something like a thin coating of sulphur. Adventurously diving through this surface, what did we discover?—Lumps of rotten sturgeon, slices of bitter cucumber, spoonfuls of biting mustard; in short, a concatenation of all the most putrid, most acrid, most villanous substances that nature produces. The Witches' broth was nothing to it:—

> "Eye of newt, and toe of frog,
> Wing of bat, and tongue of dog,"

would be delicacies most exquisite, compared with these Russian horrors. But, though both *smell* and *sight* were wellnigh daunted, we resolved to persevere like men. We had begun the perilous adventure, and could not with honour draw back, before *taste* had also been put to proof. A spoonful of it was accordingly raised to the lips; when,

lo! besides its other recommendations, it was found to be literally as cold as ice; for the mountain projecting above the surface, which we had innocently supposed to be some nice redeeming jelly, of Russian invention, turned out to be a lump of ice from "the frosty Caucasus," or some other vile place. That mouthful was the worst we ever swallowed! It would be impossible to depict the looks of anguish which we, a party of deluded, inexperienced Englishmen, cast on each other. It took away the breath; tears rolled from our eyes; we were more than satisfied—we were humbled, silenced, overcome; and made a vow before the whole company of strangers, never more to be lured into an attempt to make new discoveries in the adventurous region of Russian dishes.

The Russians consider this soup the highest possible luxury, and eat it when it can be got (which is not often, as it is expensive), with the same avidity that a French *abbé* displays in attacking his *dindon aux truffes*, or an Italian his beccaficoes.

With one of their dishes we could have made out very well; the pudding, or something in that way, made from BUCKWHEAT. Being very cheap, it is much eaten by the middling classes, but may also be seen at the tables of the great, at least once or twice a-week. It is considered very

wholesome. Buckwheat, however, being a very important article in Russian agriculture, it will be more particularly mentioned at a subsequent page.

We once got a very good kind of BROTH, with an unwonted, but not unpalatable, addition—huge spoonfuls of thick cream thrown into the plate. This was in a part of the country where, of course, cheese is unknown, otherwise the cream would have been less abundant.

Generally speaking, the true place for seeing national dishes, as well as national manners, is at the tables of the native merchants. In the provinces, they live in old abundance and old hospitality. When a feast is made, the mistress of the house, as already hinted, is completely the slave and servant of her husband's guests. She waits upon them at table, with unwearied assiduity, from first to last, coming round with the dishes herself, and scarcely sharing of any till all have been served.

The only dish we should really envy the Russians for, is their MUSHROOMS. In England, mushrooms are used by very few; in Russia, the use of them is universal, from the emperor to the beggar; and those who know what a delicate dish they make—the salted ones excepted—need not be told that they are always welcome, whether dressed

with a rich sauce, as at the tables of St. Petersburg, or with the plainer art of a hut by the wayside. Many of the peasants live almost entirely upon them, at some seasons of the year. In the summer afternoons, bands of village children may be seen searching for them in the woods, with little baskets on their arms; and in the mornings, at some places south of Moscow, we met long files of women, returning from the forests with the hasty growth of the night, heaped in large black baskets on their shoulders, like a string of fish-women of the Moray-frith, trudging to market with their odorous "creels." We did not hear the value of those sold in one year at St. Petersburg; but were told, that in Moscow, not fewer than 200,000 roubles' worth (8000*l.*), are brought to market every summer. They are most abundant in the districts where open forests occur, and are always more plentiful under certain kinds of trees; far south, they disappear altogether. The best weather for them is sunshine, intermixed with showers by day and warmth over night.

What surprised us most of all regarding them, was to find, that *the very kinds which are poisonous with us, are here used every day without the least danger.* "These are the mushrooms of your English woods," said a gentleman with whom we first saw them: "why don't you eat them at

home?" The information was far from tranquillizing; few would like to be told that they had made the best part of their dinner on poison; but as no evil consequences followed, we doubted whether they could be really the same. Further inquiry, however, convinced us beyond all doubt that, be the cause what it may, mushrooms which are highly poisonous in Great Britain, are perfectly innocent in Russia. This is no new discovery: our men of science are already aware of the fact, but none of them have been able to explain it. With us, only *three* kinds are eatable—the common mushroom (*Agaricus campestris*), the fairy ring (*Agaricus pratensis*), and the *Agaricus Georgii*:—in Russia, nearly ten times that number are used; in fact, almost every kind. A French cook told us, that he himself knew at least *twenty* varieties, all fit for the table, and that an accident from them is here totally unknown; he considered such a thing quite impossible. The only precaution necessary, he said, is not to boil two distinct species together; but this is merely from the degree of boiling which suits one, not being sufficient for the other.

That mushrooms, virulently poisonous in one country, are eaten with safety in another, is well known in other cases; as, for instance, in that of the fly mushroom (*Agaricus muscarius*), which

is very common in England, and always poisonous there, while in Kamtschatka, it is used as a frequent article of food. In France and Italy also, some of our noxious mushrooms become quite safe. Now, what can be the cause of this remarkable diversity? Surely the question merits more attention than has yet been bestowed on it. It is not enough to say, that difference of soil and climate explain the mystery;—for though we know that *culture* changes the properties of plants, converting what is poisonous in its wild state, into a wholesome esculent when raised in the garden,—as in the case of the common celery, for example; yet, throughout the whole vegetable kingdom, we find almost no other instance of a plant, which is poisonous in one country, becoming wholesome, *without culture*, when transplanted to another, and left entirely to itself, and, in both, placed in apparently the same circumstances as to soil, exposure, &c. After all, a great part of the secret may lie, not in the plant, but in the mode of preparing it for the table; and it is to this point that some of our practical authorities ought to direct their attention. So far as we can judge, the Russian cook, on first cutting up these spoils of the forest, makes a much more copious use of salt than is done with us; and the efficacy of this agent in deaden-

ing the poisonous quality, is sufficiently proved by the melancholy case recorded in the medical treatises, of a French officer and his wife, both of whom died within thirty-two hours after eating of certain mushrooms, while the person who supplied them, and his whole family, made a hearty and wholesome meal from the same gathering. A careful inquiry having been afterwards instituted, it was found that no blame could be attached to the latter: the misfortune appeared to have originated entirely in the different modes of cooking employed —one family had eaten them without any addition; the other had strongly salted them before boiling, and then squeezed them carefully before partaking of them. Such an occurrence as this, while it points to a very important fact in the dressing of these productions, enjoins also more than ordinary caution on those who would make experiments with them; but that experiments ought to be made with more diligence than has yet been done, little argument can be required to show. Heaven forbid, that the day should come when our peasantry shall, from necessity, be driven to think of these as substitutes for less doubtful fare! But no one who has tasted the savoury dish made of them by the Russians, while he deprecates the prospect of their ever being used *from necessity* in England, will

deny that, *as a luxury*, they would form a most desirable addition to the tables, both of rich and poor. A few kinds have already found their way to the tables of the better classes amongst us; but it is a *more general use* of the easily procured species that is now contended for. Why should the lower classes of other countries continue exclusively to enjoy a cheap and simple delicacy, which nature seems also to have intended for those of England?

We have now nearly done with the subject of Russian dishes; yet, as the reader may have remarked, nothing has been said of a dish which, in England, is believed to be a favourite article of food with this refined people—namely, the delicate and rare substance vulgarly known by the name of tallow. The belief that all Frenchmen live on frogs, is not more common than the one that all Russians live on the dainty dish now named; and the one is just as correct as the other. Without reverting, however, to the subject of the diet of the lower orders, which has already been considered, we shall merely add, that there is one dish sometimes seen amongst them, which we should be glad to see plenty of within reach of our own poor. Who that has at all heard of Russian dishes, has not heard of their *Tschi*, or cabbage-soup? Soups in all parts of the continent are generally little better

than an aggravated edition of toast-and-water; but this is really a good sensible affair. Like the soup already spoken of, it is sometimes mixed with *sniatky* (fish); and then does it become all that Russian taste can desire of most luxurious and delightful.

CHAPTER XX.

THE ENGLISH IN ST. PETERSBURG; WITH NOTICES OF THE EXPENSE OF LIVING IN IT, AND HINTS ON THE HOTELS, &c.

English mercantile houses—Style of living among the British—Nature of their business—Large capitals—Tallow trade—Residences of the English—The English quay—English Back Line—The factory—Church — Library — Clubs — Horse-races — Fox-hounds—Bear-shooting—English and Russian merchants contrasted—No Jews merchants—Scotch land-stewards.—English tutors and governesses—Mr. Baird, the engineer—Total number of English—Warning to people not to be rash in going to Russia—Capricious treatment from the authorities—Englishman sent to Siberia—Grooms from England—English physicians in St. Petersburg—Country cottages of the English—Of the Russian nobles—Hard names of the nobility—Short summer—Compared with that of England—Living here very cheap for the poor—Expensive for the rich—Costly furniture—House rent—Bad hotels—Excellent English houses — *Tables d'hôte*—Coffee-houses—Travellers' purchases—Velvets—Leather—Slippers—Furs.

In several of the preceding chapters, allusion has been made to the difference between the habits of Russians and English. There can be no doubt, however, that in some things, the better class of

Russians have imitated English manners to a considerable degree. Even such of the nobles as have not travelled, enjoy good opportunity of becoming acquainted with our national habits, through the great number of English resident as merchants in St. Petersburg; many of whom are very intimate with the most distinguished of the Russian nobility.

The English society here is not only numerous, but most respectable. It is chiefly composed of gentlemen possessing all the high qualities which combine to make up one of the highest characters in the world—that of an English merchant; a title which, on the continent, is still one of the most honourable that a man can bear, being associated in the minds even of our enemies with ideas of strict integrity, great liberality, and high intelligence. Among the more distinguished houses are those of Thomson, Bonar, and Co.; Cayley and Co., another long-established firm of high character; Gray and Co.; that of Allan, Stuart, and Co., &c. Many of these gentlemen live in great splendour, and their attention to travellers, properly introduced, is unbounded. In fact, the tone and general style of society among them is so superior, that, after visiting nearly every trading place on the continent, in which English are to be found, we must give the palm to our countrymen at St. Petersburg.

With the good sense and good taste which might be expected in men of this stamp, these gentlemen strictly refrain from politics. As the guests—and favoured ones—of the state, they are in honour bound to this line of conduct; and from all we saw, we should say that the emperor has not in his dominions more loyal nor more devoted subjects, than the respectable and influential body composing the English society at St. Petersburg.

It is well known, that many handsome fortunes have been made here by our countrymen; but they themselves maintain that the greatest fortunes have been made in Riga; which may be easily accounted for, by the less expensive style of living in such a place, compared with that of the metropolis.

The peculiar nature of some branches of the Russian trade requiring a very large capital, so few natives can carry them on successfully, that our countrymen enjoy very nearly a monopoly of the more lucrative part of the commerce of St. Petersburg. The export of tallow, for instance, which is among the most important branches of the Russian trade, is almost entirely in their hands; and that the capital required to carry it on is very large, will be seen from the fact, that one house has been known to pay away as much as 400,000*l.* in a single year, on this article alone. Payments being made beforehand, or, at least, long

before the delivery of the article at St. Petersburg, this trade is said to be very precarious. In order to secure the tallow which is to be delivered in England a year hence, it is necessary to send purchasers to the remotest parts of the empire, full twelve months before; but if in the mean time prices should fall at London, the merchant loses not only the interest on his large capital for that long period, but also a great portion of his first outlay.

In connexion with this branch of trade, it may be stated, that it is not so much from having a larger proportion of cattle than other countries, that Russia is able to export such immense quantities of tallow, as from the circumstance that the people, instead of using that article itself, employ some substitute for it in their domestic economy. Most of the farmers, for instance, use fir-roots in place of candles, and carefully hoard the tallow of every ox they kill, knowing that it will sell as profitably as the produce of their fields.

Many respectable English families reside on the Vassilii island, and in other quarters of the capital; but the more fashionable part seem to prefer the quay of the Grand Neva, formerly described, and known as the English quay; of which the establishment called the English Factory, and the houses of our merchants, form some of the principal ornaments.

The less pretending street in the rear of this, called *Galernoy Oulitza*, is so full of British, that it is always spoken of as the English Back Line, (from its being at *the back* of the English quay). Here are situated the boarding-establishments and lodging-houses most frequented by our countrymen, some kept by English, and some by Americans. It is a street of great length, not mean and filthy as we had imagined, but very clean, and formed of handsome houses, with excellent pavement, from end to end. Each of the houses, like nearly all others here, has a large courtyard, either in front or rear.

Most of our countrymen may be seen once a-day in the Exchange, a very handsome building in the Grecian style, near the Custom-house. The principal time of business is from four to half-past five, when the Russian merchants go home to supper, and the English to dinner.

There is no permanent residence for the English ambassador. Each new representative takes a house suited to his means. That which Lord Durham occupied, is said to have cost him near a thousand pounds a-year.

The English factory is chiefly occupied by a very handsome place of worship, and apartments for the clergyman, the Rev. Mr. Law. This is the most beautiful and becoming English chapel

in any part of the continent. There is also an excellent English library attached to the establishment, of which strangers have a most liberal use, on the recommendation of members. There is a Presbyterian place of worship in another part of the city, where a Scottish clergyman officiates.

St. Petersburg contains two English clubs—one on the Moïka, and another on the quay just spoken of. Both are excellent, and distinguished by their liberality to strangers; but we can speak only of the latter, where there is a copious supply of all the (permitted) newspapers, French, English, German, an account of which will be given at the close of the next chapter; also handsome apartments, good society, and unexceptionable dinners. Though called *English*, these clubs contain men of wealth of all nations.

With characteristic attachment to their home amusements, our countrymen have of late got up Horse-Races in true English style, and have now the satisfaction of seeing the Russians beginning to imitate them. In addition to these many English things, they have also a good pack of fox-hounds; but we did not hear that the Russian nobles risk their necks so freely with our friends in the field, as they do their money with them in the club-houses. They speak of excellent shooting in winter; and even in autumn there is tolerable

sport among the partridges (a different species from ours), within thirty miles of the capital. Some Englishmen killed a great many elks, the Christmas before our visit, about 70 versts (46 miles) from town. Another party shot two bears; but such luck is rare, many having been here several years without finding one.

Though not able to compete with our countrymen in extensive speculations, there are in all parts of Russia many native merchants of great fortune. There is an immense difference between them, however, both as to way of living and general character. The former are held in great esteem, and looked upon as a superior class, even by the nobles, to whom they give entertainments, and from whom they receive attentions in return. The Russian merchant, on the contrary, even when wealthy, is regarded as belonging to a degraded caste. There are various degrees of this degradation, the merchants being divided into guilds, first, second, &c., each having distinct privileges. We never saw a Russian merchant of any grade without thinking of a Jew, his dress and beard being generally so like those which continental Jews so frequently display. The resemblance goes still farther; as already stated, they are as greedy, and as ready to overreach, as any Hebrew that ever trod the Rialto. With

this grasping disposition the Russians succeed well as merchants on a small scale. They have that true love of pelf necessary to push them on in petty undertakings, but have not spirit for any great enterprise. Russian Jews are not allowed to settle in St. Petersburg, or to carry on business of any kind: Stieglitz, the wealthy Jew banker, is of German origin.

Returning to the subject of the British, however, we may state, that though there are many Scotchmen employed as land-stewards in various parts of Russia, yet few of them are to be seen near the capital.

It surprised us to hear that so many English are now employed in Russia as tutors and governesses in noble families. They are well paid, and, in general, do not appear to regret the choice they have made.

The English, or rather the Scotch medical men here, still enjoy a very respectable share of the public regard. Sir William Crichton has left Russia, and Dr. Walker has also retired from the capital, leaving the field to Doctors Handyside, Macnab, and Lefevre. Sir James Wyllie, who was physician to the late emperor, continues to reside here, and is still in favour at court. The Grand Duke Michael has also a medical attendant from Scotland, a nephew and namesake of the learned

knight last named. If we mistake not, however, the golden days of foreign physicians in this country are now gone by; for though a good many surgeons from Edinburgh are still employed in the navy, Russia will, ere long, be able to manufacture doctors for herself.

Although, as formerly stated, there are few English shopkeepers, or general tradesmen here, compared with those of other foreign nations, yet on the whole there cannot be less than 2400 Englishmen in St. Petersburg, of one class or other. Of these a great number are employed by Mr. Baird, a thriving engineer, in building steamboats, iron bridges, &c. Many are also placed at the head of government works of different kinds. Nearly all of these superintendents, in compliance with a usage already referred to, glory in the title of captain or some other warlike distinction, conferred by the emperor, to give them dignity in the eyes of his people. Some of these gentlemen are tolerably paid, but none, so far as we could hear, handsomely. An Englishman who superintends a large number of workmen, employed in the fabric of a very important article, has only 120*l.* (3000 roubles) a-year, and we did not hear that he values his military distinction at a great deal.

On the whole, we saw no inducement to tempt

Englishmen to enter the Tzar's employment in any capacity whatever. Few of our countrymen now in Russian pay appear to be very much satisfied with their position. Even were they to be remunerated in the very handsomest manner, what attraction can there be in a service where they are every moment liable to be the victims of the most capricious and unsparing despotism? It was but the other day that an Englishman who had unhappily been lured to St. Petersburg, in order to superintend some public works, was banished to Siberia, for what appears to have been a misapprehension regarding the perquisites included in his contract. Warned, therefore, by such an example, Englishmen, whether mere mechanics or men of science and skill, ought to ponder well before they abandon a country where the oppressor cannot trample on the weak, for the brilliant but perilous honour of serving a master whose power is subject to no control.

Illiberal, uncharitable as it may sound, we cannot help confessing that we have never witnessed without a grudge, so many of our countrymen transferring their talents and experience to the service of the stranger. What has Russia —what have the other nations of Europe—ever sent us back in return for our too frequent exportations of this nature? Nothing but rivalry, and ex-

clusion from their markets, the moment they think it possible to cripple our commerce, by excessive burdens and unjust restrictions.

There still remains to be mentioned a class of our countrymen who have of late been employed in considerable numbers, both at St. Petersburg and in the provinces—we mean grooms from St. James's and trainers from Newmarket. The more wealthy of the Russian nobles now go to great expense in keeping certain kinds of horses, especially trotters and racers; and, by giving large wages, have induced not a few "crack men" to go and take charge of their studs. Those of them who remain in or near the capital may find little reason to repent their exile; but such as go five or six hundred miles to some lonely place in the interior, are not in the most comfortable condition, however kindly treated; though it is but fair to add, that in the families of the nobility, English dependents of every description are always most indulgently, and even affectionately, treated by their employers.

With true English taste for country life, many of the merchants have built pretty cottages along the shores of the bay, where they spend the brief but beautiful summer with their families. Their example in this, also, has been followed by some of the noble Russians, whose villas on the road to

Peterhof are very fine. Among these are *Kras naiamouisa* and *Hah-hah*, elegant mansions belonging to the Naryshkine family. Other families, such as those of Ostermann-Tolstoy, Khitrovo, Daschkoff, Chouvaloff, Demidoff, and many other "offs," might be named among the possessors of fine villas in the neighbourhood; but the names of the proprietors are as difficult to transcribe as those of Viasemski, Belzkoï, Miloradovitch, Belocelski, Lapoukhine, Zavadofski, Ghika, Cheremetieff, Jakovleff, Tchernicheff, Roumantsoff, Lomonosoff, Khanikoff, Tchitchagoff, Ismailoff, &c. &c., which adorn the mausoleums and monuments of the capital, but are never placed by the traveller in his notes, from the difficulty of writing such unwonted sounds.

When we expressed our delight at the beautiful evenings of July, our countrymen never failed to remind us that the summer-life of the Russian fashionables is the shortest in Europe. They can seldom leave St. Petersburg before the beginning of June, and the increasing frosts compel them to return again by the first of September! that is, they are taking their flight for town at the very time when the higher classes of happy England are beginning to make themselves comfortable in the country. Nay, their summer often terminates before these three brief months are

out. In the beginning of August, during our stay in St. Petersburg, cold, rain, and high winds prevailed with such severity, that some gentlemen told us they must soon commence their preparations for town, the winter having, in all probability, already set in. At least, when the weather breaks in this way, though they may not have snow, they are sure to have little but rain and cold till the frost appears in grim reality. Winter in August, good friends—think of that! Truly this is a delightful climate: a few weeks, or, at most, months of boiling heat, and throughout all the rest, cold so intense that the circulation nearly stagnates. Even in summer we are reminded what their winter colds are, by the huge stoves, like houses, in the churches, as well as in the lobbies of theatres, which in winter are always well heated, for servants to shelter themselves in. Yet, with every precaution, coachmen at that season are often frozen to death, while waiting for, or driving their masters. Sentinels also die on their posts in winter-nights, when the thermometer is often more than fifty degrees below zero! Though there are large houses for drilling the soldiers in, their sufferings from cold, even when going through their exercise, it is said, are most dreadful.

May not such facts justify us in asking, "Where

is there a country favoured like our own?" We complain of our climate; but, equally remote from the treacherous heats of Italy and the freezing colds of Russia, it is, beyond doubt, the best in the world.

The expense of living in St. Petersburg being a subject of considerable interest to the general reader, it may be stated that, to those who can content themselves with the bare necessaries of life, this city is, perhaps, one of the cheapest places in the world. The sum for which an economist may support himself, is incredibly small. We have heard of a foreigner who expended no more than six shillings a-week; yet, by his own confession, he wanted for nothing!

This, however, applies only to the lower and middle classes; for people of fortune, St. Petersburg is one of the dearest places in the world. As already stated, the general style of living among these is ruinously expensive. The variety of new and costly dresses required by the ladies of a family, whether young or old, is beyond all that female extravagance ever imagined in any other part of Europe. The style of furniture now in vogue, also occasions an immense expenditure. Costly mirrors—numerous windows, each of a single pane—gilding, in tasteless profusion—furniture of the rarest kinds of wood—marble of the

most costly descriptions—articles of jasper, malachite, and porphyry—or-molu ornaments of extreme beauty—gold and silver plate of the newest forms—in short, all that honest wealth, or dishonest poverty can purchase, are deemed indispensable in a Russian mansion of the highest class. The Russian rule is, that nothing which is not rare, and consequently expensive, can be worth having. Add to these the high prices of wines, and of all articles of luxury for the table, and it will at once be seen, that none can make any figure here without an enormous income. The single item of house-rent, swallows up the annual profits wrung from a couple of thousand serfs. Several houses were pointed out to us as letting for 25,000 roubles (1000*l.*) a-year; a rent which is very rarely heard of even in London. It must be added, however, that from the immense number of servants kept by the Russian nobility, a first-rate town mansion here is larger than one of corresponding rank in England.

The passing stranger finds few *good* hotels. *Demuth's*, the most fashionable, is dear and uncomfortable. This being a Russian house, you have to pay while in it for a numerous train of servants, and, after all, can scarcely get any attendance. Each man, Hindu-fashion, having a separate department, the com-

mission you want executed is delegated from one to another, and probably neglected altogether. *Coulon's*, in the Nefskoï, we have heard highly spoken of, by travellers who have been in Russia since the time of our visit. The *Hôtel de Londres* and *Hôtel de Paris* are on the plan of the second-rate hotels of Paris, with bad rooms, indifferent *restaurants*, or *tables-d'hôte*, high prices, plenty of filth, and noise insufferable. The German house, *Heide's*, on the Vassilii-Ostroff, is very good for a short stay; but those who like English comfort and English cleanliness, cannot be better any where than in the house of Mrs. Cotesworth, in the *English Back Line*, where they may have good board, lodging, and attendance—in short, every thing except wine—for the marvellously reasonable charge of 8 roubles (6*s.* 8*d.*) a-day. Mrs. Wilson's, much frequented by Americans, is also an excellent house. Good private lodgings may be had in the same street, and other parts of the town, at London prices.

The fees for sights, and the other incidental expenses of the traveller, make St. Petersburg, and Russia generally, more expensive than most parts of the continent. Dinner at a restaurateur's, including the cheapest wine, seldom costs less than 7 or 8 francs, and is not better than what would cost only one-half in Paris. A bottle of

small-beer in the coffee-houses (of which there are scarcely any in the French style) is charged 8*d.*; in Paris it would be 2*d.* A hackney-coach for two persons to go a short distance into the country, where some fête was going forward, was charged near 60 roubles, or more than twice the Paris price. Clothes are very dear, always excepting the velvet dressing-gowns already spoken of. Leather articles of all kinds are cheap; and as Russian leather, though not at all durable, is in high repute from the peculiar flavour which the manufacturers of other countries have never succeeded in imitating, strangers always lay in a large stock of them. Ordinary boots are about the same price as in Paris; that is, one-half the price of a London fashionable shop; but dress-boots that *look* well, may be bought for 7*s.* 6*d.* Morocco boots for the dressing-room, and ladies' slippers, of all imaginable hues, are often brought to England, as presents, by those who choose to pay the duty on them at home. Furs are also so cheap, in comparison with English prices, that travellers are in the way of lining their old cloaks (thus escaping the duty) with a sufficient quantity to keep their fair friends in England warm for at least a couple of winters.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE UNIVERSITY AND LIBRARIES; FINE ARTS AND LITERATURE.

Great exertions of the Emperor Alexander in behalf of national education—Result doubtful—University of St. Petersburg—Its comparative inferiority—Number of students and professors—Compared with Dorpat—Academy of sciences—Fossil remains—Imperial library—Persian manuscripts—Academy of painting—Hermitage gallery—Murillo—Paul Potter—Periodical and general literature—Poets—Karamsin.

UNTIL the time of the late Emperor Alexander, Russia, in regard to education, was the most neglected nation of Europe. Under him, however, much was done to remove this stigma. Schools were established all over the country; universities were planted in the principal cities, and liberally endowed; men of ardour and learning were sought out and induced to settle in them: in short, neither cost nor encouragement was spared in the good cause.

But has the result corresponded with the bene-

volent patriot's anticipations? Has education spread among the poor and the ignorant? Has the seed so liberally scattered on a not ungrateful soil, really begun to bear its goodly fruits? Alas! we shall hereafter see that in spite of all that was done, and is doing, popular education is advancing but slowly; for in many of the governments of the interior through which we shall pass in the course of our wanderings, out of every four or five hundred of the population, there is not more than *one* young person attending school. The educational schemes of the government have hitherto been unsuccessful in the provinces, because the people, being ignorant of the value of instruction, seldom think of sending their children to school.

In the large cities, however, public seminaries are most successfully conducted and numerously attended. This holds true of the capital more particularly. The number of gymnasia in St. Petersburg is very great, in addition to military and normal schools, and in fact, educational institutions of every kind. All of these are very flourishing, with the exception of the university alone, which, though opened under the most favourable auspices, and with the brightest promise of almost immediately attaining high eminence, appears to be still very inferior to its ancient and highly-celebrated rival at Moscow, and is even eclipsed by

the university of Dorpat, in Livonia. The institution last named would appear to be the most prosperous of all the universities in Russia, many of its professors, such as Struve, the astronomer, Parrot, the traveller, and others, being men of great eminence in the scientific world. It is usually attended by six hundred students; while St. Petersburg seldom reckons more than two hundred and fifty, divided among the goodly array of forty-two professors. In both universities, as indeed in nearly all throughout the empire, the principal chairs are filled by Germans. The university of St. Petersburg was founded by Alexander in the year 1819; and was the seventh which that enlightened monarch had established during his reign.

The number of scientific establishments in St. Petersburg is very great; but we can mention only the *Imperial Academy of Sciences*, on the quay of the Vassilii-Ostroff, which possesses collections of immense value, in almost every department of human knowledge. Its library contains more than 105,000 volumes, including many valuable manuscripts. The Zoological Museum is among the most celebrated in Europe, from containing some of the most singular fossil remains that have yet been discovered; especially those of the mammoth, found in the ice at the mouth of the Lena, in

Siberia, the bones of the leg of which are as thick as the human body. It would be impossible to describe the feelings of wonder with which we gazed on this huge monster of another world; a naked, hideous anatomy, standing in grim mockery of all that has passed, and is passing, around him. The flesh, skin, and hair, were quite entire at the time of his first discovery (1799–1806), and even now his well-propped bones look sturdy enough to carry him through our modern world, if he had any regard for the degenerate elves which usurp his place. His vast bulk, when first seen in his icy bed, so frightened the simple huntsman who discovered him, that he fell sick at the sight, and took to bed, believing that it boded him some evil fortune. He stands 9 feet 4 inches high, and 16 feet 4 inches long, without including the tusks or *horns* (as his neighbours, the Tungusians, more appropriately call them), which are of most amazing bulk, measuring along the curve 9 feet 6 inches, and weighing together 360 lbs. avoirdupois! The tusks of fossil elephants are so numerous in Eastern Siberia, that they are sold throughout Russia as an article of commerce, and are used by ivory-turners for the same purposes as the tusks of the elephants of the present day; but the works made from them are not so fine nor so beautiful. This museum contains also some

fossil skeletons of other huge quadrupeds, such as the rhinoceros, the urus, and buffalo, all found in the same remote region. The mineralogical department is likewise very rich, as well as the collections of medals, the Asiatic and Egyptian rooms, &c.

The *Imperial Library*, in the Nefskoï Prospekht, would merit a chapter to itself, were it only for the immense number of valuable oriental manuscripts, for which it has long been famous. To these have now been added the celebrated library of Ardebil, which came into the hands of the Russians on the fall of that city in 1827: it contained, exclusive of duplicates, ninety-six works of great value, such as the *Djami-Ettevarikh*, the *Zefer-Nameh*, by Sheref-ed-din Iesdy; the *Teskeret-etch-chuera*, a History of Persian Poetry, by Daületchah; the *Shah-Nameh* of Firdousi; the *Iskender-Nameh*; the *Shah-Nameh* of Thumach the First; and a great many other poems. In addition to all these, there are at least 350 volumes, chiefly in the Persian and other eastern languages, brought, by General Paskevitch, from Erzerum and the places adjacent.

As might be expected, among all these institutions for the advancement of science and learning, the Fine Arts have not been forgotten. The academy founded for their encouragement was

liberally endowed, and is said to be at present in a very flourishing condition. It contains some valuable treasures; but the lover of pictures will find still more to please him in the Hermitage Palace and its wilderness of rooms, where there are some thousands of pictures, many of them surpassing in value even the porphyry vases and other costly articles profusely scattered through this beautiful retreat. The Spanish collection is the richest in the world, out of Spain; there are Murillos and Morales enough to fill even Marshal Soult with envy. The late emperor added the Malmaison pictures to this splendid collection, which had already been enriched by the Houghton gallery, greatly to the disgrace of England, who ought never to have parted with such an acquisition. The Hermitage boasts of one of the most celebrated pictures in the world, Paul Potter's "Cow," which, however, can by no means be compared with his "Bull" at the Hague. Wouvermanns has a whole room to himself; and Schneiders fills another with his vast hunting-pieces. There are some lovely gems both of Cuyp and Ruysdaehl, three splendid Teniers, and Vandycks beyond all price. Rembrandt and Reubens have contributed some of their best works, as well as Gerard Douw, Mieris,

and Ostade. We saw but one Titian and one Raphael, but the gallery is rich in the works of Claude, Vernet, and Poussin.

Several native artists of great promise have lately appeared, and those who are best acquainted with the nation believe that the Russians will yet rise high as painters.

From the Fine Arts passing to literature, and, first, to its most familiar department, we find that though the scientific periodicals of Russia, published by the various learned bodies, maintain a very high character, yet periodical literature of a general kind does not appear to meet with much encouragement. In no country, however, does it exercise more tyrannical sway. We do not mean that it influences the mass of the people, who, it is well known, do not read at all; but its power over the educated and "buying" portion of the community is so great, that they are invariably guided by the sentiments of their favourite periodicals, in all matters connected with literature, the drama, or the fine arts.

The total number of periodicals in Russia, including newspapers and scientific journals, lately amounted to 86; but their number has since been increased, in consequence of the establishment of printing-presses in some of the remoter provinces.

Of these, 45 are in the Russian language, and the remainder in French, German, the Lette tongue, &c.

Of all the periodicals, we are sorry to say, a French compilation of fashions and idle tales appears to be the most popular; but, so far as we could learn, none of the St. Petersburg periodicals, either daily or monthly, reckons more than 3000 subscribers. It would be unjust, however, to deny that there is very great talent displayed by the conductors of these publications. The *Literary Library*, a monthly periodical, whose editors are great admirers of English literature, and are accused of being partial to English principles in other matters, often contains articles which would do honour to any periodical in Europe. The influence exercised by this journal over the public taste is very great, its circulation being the highest of all the periodicals of the capital. The *Son of the Country*, another monthly work, is also highly spoken of, but its talented editors are accused of dealing too much in German mysticism.

In the provinces of Russia periodical literature is almost unknown, except in the university towns, at some of which scientific journals are now published. One of these, the *Gazette of Moscow*,

has long had a very high character, and it still circulates nearly 10,000 copies.

Of newspapers, St. Petersburg has great abundance. They are also exceedingly cheap, some being as low as 15 roubles (13*s.* 6*d.*) a-year, while few even of the daily ones are higher than twice that sum. With a parade of anxiety to communicate information on government subjects, and yet after all communicating but very little, each ministry publishes a newspaper on the affairs of its own department; so that the general reader must buy the Minister of War's paper, that of the Home Minister, &c., before he can know what is passing. There are several German papers published here; one of which, closely filled with advertisements, appears twice a-week. The *Gazette de St. Petersbourg* is in French; but few of its articles are of any value. Those as well as the newspapers printed in the Russian language are printed in a clear type, on thin paper, of a small folio size, such as that which was employed for the Paris newspapers, until within the last ten or twelve years.

Generally speaking, Russian newspapers are mere vehicles for advertisements and government documents. They scarcely ever contain a single article of home news. Any intelligence that is given consists entirely of extracts, accidents,

deaths, wonderful stories, &c., from the English and other foreign journals. The *Northern Bee*, the title at least of which is well known in other parts of Europe, may in some respects be an exception to this remark. It is a daily paper, and said to be conducted by several gentlemen who enjoy great popularity as authors in other departments of literature. From the character given us of its articles, they would appear to display more playfulness of humour than depth of learning.

As will be seen at a future page, when we come to speak of the emperor's regulations regarding foreign books and newspapers, government has laid the severest trammels on the press, and consequently on thought. In spite of all these restrictions, however, Russian literature is advancing with great rapidity. Several of the authors who have recently appeared are distinguished by great boldness and originality of fancy. Some of the novelists, and especially Bulgarine (one of the editors of the *Northern Bee*), are highly popular as painters of national manners; their works are also read with great avidity in Germany, where they circulate through translations. Of all their poets Pouschkin* is the most

* This distinguished poet fell in a duel (February, 1837), soon after our visit to St. Petersburg. The causes, and indeed the whole history, of this melancholy affair are of the most revolting description.

popular; without being an imitator, he is said to have much of the manner of Byron.

Of all Russian authors, however, the name of Karamsin stands highest; but his merits are so universally known that it is unnecessary to speak of them here.—Of their other dead authors, the names which we heard most frequently repeated among the Russians, are those of Bogdanovitch and Dmitriev, famed as poets. Of the first of these it may be stated, as he is little known to the English reader, that he was born in 1743, in the town of Perevolotchna, in Little Russia, and was author of the *Dushenka*, said to be a very happy performance, on the mythological story of Psyche, abounding in graces of style, and playfulness of illustration, as well as in lofty eloquence and polished vivacity. The Russians are extremely proud of this poem, and delight to speak of its author as the Moore of Russia. During his life, he was highly esteemed by Catherine, who gave him a lucrative appointment in some public department, after he had retired from the diplomatic service for which he was educated.

Dmitriev, born at Simbirsk, in 1760, and educated at Kasan, is the Lafontaine of Russia. His fables, remarkable for refinement of sentiment and simplicity of style, are extremely popular, the

Russians having a great taste for this kind of composition. His epistles, odes, and satires, are also prized. The works of this author, next to those of Karamsin, did much towards fixing the Russian language. He was at first in the army, but afterwards in the civil service, where he enjoyed a handsome income. In fact, the Russian government never allows genius to linger either in poverty or obscurity.

Beyond those now mentioned, there are but few names, living or dead, that Russians can bring forward in connexion with literature. Its annals in this long-neglected region are short and scanty, as will be seen from the list which we shall now give of all the other distinguished writers of whom they can boast.

Until the time of Prince Cantemir, in the reign of the Empress Anna, no author had employed the language with any success. His translations of Horace and Boileau are said (for, of course, all that we can state on the subject of Russian literature is at second-hand, on the authority of Russians themselves) to possess little of the merits of the originals; and the same remark has been made of his translation of Fontenelle's *Plurality of Worlds*. Strictly speaking, his successor, Lomonosoff, whose name stands high as an author, may be considered the father of taste and

style among his countrymen. His *Peter the Great* contains many beautiful passages, but the interest is not well sustained. He wrote every species of poem,—tragedy, comedy, satires, epistles, elegies, eclogues, and songs; which last became very popular. The next name is that of Kerazkoff, who improved on his style and manner, but had less poetic talent than his predecessor. Having written epics on the conquest of Kasan and the history of Vladimir the Great, he was in his time pronounced the Homer of Russia, but is already forgotten. Maykoff now acquired unmerited reputation by two burlesque poems. Kniashjinin wrote lively comedies on the manners of the time, which are still admired. Kostroff translated the Iliad into Alexandrine verse, and the poems of Ossian into prose. Bobroff, a most extravagant genius, was the author of many bombastic odes, and of the *Taurida*, a descriptive poem, abounding in bright passages. Petroff wrote odes on the victories of Catherine the Great. Weissen was the author of some comedies which are full of humour. Muravieff, tutor of the Emperor Alexander, wrote treatises on Russian history, dialogues, essays, &c., all of which display much goodness of heart and love of virtue.

About this time, Derschawin gave a great

impulse to public taste. He chose, as his theme, the glory of the Russian arms under Catherine, and treated his subject with true poetic fire. The time was now at hand when the literature of Russia was to take a place among the most refined of Europe. This was done under Karamsin, whose great *History of Russia* is one of the most classical performances in any language. It rose at once into universal popularity in his own country, and is now equally esteemed by all the nations of Europe. The honours and rewards heaped upon him by the emperor were endless, and hold out strong encouragement to genius. He began his career as an author by contributions to the "Painter," a satirical journal; and soon after became editor of the *Journal of Moscow*, in which his "Letters of a Travelling Russian" first appeared.

Brief as our notice is, it must not omit Shukoffskij and Batzuschkoff. Prince Wiasemskij and Wostokoff are also named with applause. The more recent authors, not already named in this sketch, are, Kosloff, Gribogedoff, Glinka, Baron Delwig, Schazykoff, and Baratinskij.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE HOSPITALS AND PUBLIC PRISONS; RUSSIAN PUNISHMENTS.

Splendour of the hospitals—Treatment of patients compared with that in England—Crimes and criminals—Banishment to Siberia —The *knout*—Visit to the public prisons—Debtors—Criminals—Boys—Women—Great order—Rooms too much crowded—Diet—Health—The emperor's vigilance.

A GOVERNMENT which has done so much for promoting the education and the taste of the nation, may reasonably be expected not to have forgotten the more incumbent duty of providing for the alleviation of distress among the sick and the poor. We find, accordingly, that the charitable institutions of St. Petersburg are not only very numerous, but also deserve to be reckoned among the most wonderful things in this wonderful empire. Of these, however, so many accounts have already been published, that all we deem it necessary to say concerning them is, that the Hospitals are palaces,—not asylums for the poor. We have never seen any thing to compare with

the order, the cleanness, or the comfort of these establishments; they are almost too *fine* for such melancholy purposes.

But though the beds are so white, the label-boards so neat, the little tables with their soup-dish, gruel-bowl, &c., so clean—in short, though there be a great deal of *show*, we were assured by medical men on the spot, that, in all the *essentials* of hospital treatment, they are far behind our English institutions. All goes on very well till the patient needs some strengthening diet, or any other indulgence out of the common routine. *Then* there is nothing for him. Hence, some private individuals have often been obliged to support a poor patient from their own funds, when wine or expensive medicines were required.

Before saying too much about the order of these places, *the way in which it is enforced* ought to be taken into consideration. When the Emperor Alexander was going through St. Bartholomew's hospital, in London, Sir James Wylie, or some other of his doctors, drew his attention to a patient peeling potatoes, implying that, *at home*, no such irregular exhibition would ever offend the eye. Very true; but he forgot the reason. A Russian who should be guilty of the smallest deviation from the rules of the hospital, would be *scourged* for his offence. Oh, happy Russians!

It is now the fashion with some to laud every thing Russian; but we had rather be a potato-peeler in England, than a Herr Graf with the scourge hanging over us.

A visit to the prisons will also well reward the stranger. Great crimes would appear to be less common in Russia than in many of the other countries of Europe. The number of murders in the whole empire for a single year (1831) is 1271; being at the rate of *one* to every 40,000 inhabitants (taking the estimated amount of the population at the time). Suicides are also rare, having in the same year averaged *one* to 46,200 souls.

The punishment of death is now limited to those who are guilty of the highest kind of high treason. Those convicted of murder and other offences are banished to Siberia, to toil in the mines, salt-works, and government distilleries, some of which kinds of labour are so detrimental to life, that many survive but a very short period after commencing with them. Only the greatest criminals, however, have to work in these fatal places; most of those sent being employed on farms, or located as colonists.*

Convicts may be seen labouring at Cronstadt,

* For further information regarding banishment to Siberia, the number of culprits annually sent, and the total number in the country, see vol. ii., chap. vii.

and in other towns. These are prisoners condemned for stated periods; and we have heard that not a few of them are Poles! They are dressed in blue-striped trousers, short boots, and whitish jackets, with a black patch on the back.

The terrible punishment of the *knout* is no longer allowed to extend so far as to take away life. This formidable weapon, however, is of such a nature, that the executioner, according to the instructions he has got, can take the culprit's life as near as possible, leaving him in such a state that he will not recover for months, if at all. Sometimes it is little more than a severe scourging that is inflicted; but, when the executioner pleases, *four strokes of it* can be made to inflict death. The eulogists of Russia and every thing Russian stun us with praises of the mercy of their criminal code, and with songs of triumph about the emperor's clemency; but we see little proof of mercy in retaining a mode of torture which is not more gentle than that of flaying alive! There were opportunities for seeing this terrible punishment enforced during our stay in the capital, but we declined the savage sight. Those who have been present tell us that the knout is a whip of three lashes, made of the hardest kind of leather, with burnt knots, &c. The victim is tied against one of

the posts of a triangle, raised in some public place, and receives the blows on his back.

On visiting one of the prisons, in which there are generally about 400 prisoners, we found the first range of rooms occupied by debtors belonging to St. Petersburg, and noblemen (so they were called to us) from Finland, confined for minor offences—such as rioting, or being drunk in the streets. The rooms are tolerably clean, but by far too much crowded. The floors are generally of wood, and the walls plastered. The only bed is a piece of wood some two feet wide, with a sloping head, behind which lies a rug that is spread on the naked board at night: blankets are out of the question in a country where, as we have seen, a large portion of the class most likely to be in prison never think of undressing over night. Eight or ten of these beds may be seen, in two rows, in a room not much more than twenty feet long.

In one room was a flock of boys, teasing hemp, some quite children; most of them sent here for theft. The superintendent could not give us a very distinct answer when we asked whether any attempt is made to educate those who are likely to remain long in confinement; but we understand that there is a class of reading for such.

Debtors are allowed 11 roubles (9*s.* 2*d.*) a-month

by their creditors, government, of course, supporting its own debtors.

The opposite side of the well-guarded court is set apart for criminals not yet tried. A convoy leaves every Tuesday with those who have received sentence during the week; they go away in twos and threes, with a guard to each set, and walk on foot all the way to Siberia—a distance of many thousand miles. The rooms here are lower, and even more crowded than those we had left. The men, as in the others, always rose and ranged themselves as we entered. One was here for stealing 80,000 roubles (more than 3000*l.*) from his father. Generally, these unfortunate men had more the look of imbecility than of villany. It is seldom that prisoners lie very long without receiving sentence; but there is no limit to the time;—they cannot force on their trial. Hence one man has been here five years, the proof against him being insufficient: in England, he would have been set at liberty.

So little do the Russians fear having their prison arrangements criticised, that the major explained to us the minutest details; he offered even to show us a poor wretch who had that morning received five blows of the knout, for attempting to assassinate his master, a colonel.

One end of the court is occupied by the female

prisoners, of whom there were about a hundred. At the other end of the quadrangle stands the hospital, in which things are very well arranged. The number of sick is always very considerable, but especially in winter, when the jail-fever is so severe that as many as ninety patients are often in the hospital together. The linen, food, and attendance in this department, are all unexceptionable; we have seldom seen any place of the kind in better order.

So far as may be consistent with their safe keeping, the prisoners are treated with every indulgence. They are allowed abundance of a soup made from peas—varied with the national dish of buckwheat—and beef, except on fast-days and in Lent. Though there is nothing very offensive in the look of the *rooms*, the *persons* of the prisoners cannot be very clean, when they bathe only on Saturday, and sleep constantly in what they wear.

Debtors may see their relations every day; criminals can see theirs only on Sundays and holidays. There is a large Greek chapel, and a Lutheran one for foreigners.

On expressing our surprise at finding the prison in much higher order than we had been prepared for, the governor answered, "We must have it constantly in high order, for fear of the emperor." He pounces upon them at the most unexpected

times—often as early as seven in the morning! Prison-room, sick-rooms, kitchen, apothecary's room, all are inspected. But this is only in keeping with the ever-thoughtful vigilance of this extraordinary man, whose character will be more fully appreciated by glancing at the following chapters.

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE EMPEROR.

Generally represented as cruel and tyrannical—Palliation of the charge—Great interest felt about his character throughout Europe—Importance of the subject—Circumstances under which he came to the throne—Meaning of the titles Tzar, Autocrat, &c. —Miscellaneous anecdotes—Simplicity of his private habits—Happiness with his family—His opinion of the judgment which the English pass on him—The empress and the stranger—His restless activity—Love of military show—Commanding appearance of Nicholas—Fascinating manners—Especially towards foreigners—His desire to conciliate the foreign press—Attention to the French journalist, Monsieur L. W——Flatteries of French and German writers—Herr Von D—— and his book—Attachment of some of the Russian officers—Popular with the soldiers and the people—Mode of saluting him in the streets—His exertions in any public calamity—His noble conduct when cholera appeared —His activity and hardy habits in travelling—His iron bed—His energy not always productive of good—Rogues in office—No sportsman—His style of eloquence—Argument with the French ambassador—His religion—Superstition—Toleration—Not so remarkable as is often stated—Why the Jews are tolerated—Torture—only nominally abolished in Russia—Activity of his police —Spies—Anecdote of an Englishman at Kalisch—Emperor's conduct in regard to the admission of English and French newspapers—*The Morning Post—Galignani—Journal des Débats*, &c. —German papers—Censorship—Treatment of booksellers—*Byron —Books of Travels*, &c.—His restrictions on the stage—A political play.

BEFORE proceeding to state some facts illustrative

of the character and policy of the Emperor Nicholas, it is but fair to confess that, like most of our countrymen, we repaired to his dominions with strong prejudices against him. All the accounts of his character current in other parts of Europe, are so universally unfavourable, that we regarded him as a cruel, relentless tyrant, with few redeeming qualities of any kind; and this, probably, is the idea entertained of him by ninety-nine out of every hundred foreigners who ever heard his name.

Truth, however, compels us to avow that we found reason to modify our opinions concerning him. We will not acquit him from the charge of tyranny, but are now inclined to believe that he is a tyrant from circumstances more than from disposition. He is the slave of a vicious system—tied to a course from which, as yet, he has not been able to break loose. The worst excesses he has been guilty of arise from an ungovernable temper, which, by nature sufficiently strong, has been further strengthened to such a degree by the long exercise of unchecked, uncontrolled authority, that now it often bursts out in the most fatal ebullitions. His defenders assert, however, that when the passing madness has subsided, he is the first to regret, and, if possible, to atone for what has been done. They will not allow that the stern,

we might say the cruel system of discipline which prevails in the fleet and the army, and extends to officers as well as privates, can with justice be attributed to him; for it is not of his creating, but has been handed down from the times when Russian officers were really as barbarous as Russian privates; and he continues it, because, from his military education, he believes it to be the best. In fine, those who know him most intimately, assert, that however violent he may be under the fits of passion alluded to, he is not tyrannical *on system*, or from innate fierceness of disposition.

Let it not be thought, however, that we are the panegyrists of Nicholas. Until a milder policy shall be adopted towards Poland, his faults are too strongly engraved in a nations wrongs to be blotted out by redeeming traits of a mere private nature, even were these more strong than any that he has hitherto displayed. Yet that his character is not such a complete concentration of unmixed evil as has generally been supposed, will appear from some of the facts now to be adduced.

It is necessary, however, in the very outset to state that it is not here intended to give a complete history, or even a brief memoir of the emperor.* What is aimed at in these pages, is

* The Emperor Paul, assassinated in 1801, left four sons: *Alex-*

simply to communicate a few facts illustrative of the character of the man on whom the eyes of all Europe are at this moment fixed;—on whom the peace and welfare of the world are more dependent than they ever before were on a single individual, at any period in the long history of human society. The Emperor of Russia has but to say the word, and the flames of war shall burn more universally than they have ever done even in our warlike day —in Europe, in Asia, in America—wherever there is a right to acquire, or a heart to defend. In all parts of the earth, the elements of discord are lying prepared, with a profusion only too unsparing and too ominous; nothing is wanting but the reckless hand to place the torch to the pile, and in one short month the blaze shall be as wide and as fierce, as the fellest enemy of our race could desire.

In attempting, however, to make the public acquainted with the character and the measures of the sovereign in whose hands the temporal weal

ander, the late emperor, who died at Taganrog on the 1st of December, 1825; *Constantine*, who ought to have succeeded his elder brother, and who died in 1832; *Nicholas*, the present emperor; and the Grand-duke *Michael*, Viceroy of Poland. The present emperor was born July 6, 1796, and in 1817, married Charlotte (on her admission to the Greek church, rebaptized Alexandra Feodorovna), daughter of the King of Prussia. Their family consists of four sons, the oldest born in 1818, and three daughters.

or woe of humanity are for the time so helplessly placed, the author does not profess to have had access to sources of secret or exclusive information regarding him. Of a *public* nature he has nothing to reveal but what may be learnt by any one moving in good society at St. Petersburg, or among respectable Russians in other parts of Europe; while of *private* anecdotes — of court calumnies or of chamber scandal—he has literally none to impart. Even had he been inclined to retail facts of the description last alluded to, there is one good reason why these pages can contain nothing of the kind,—namely, because the author had it not in his power to acquire any personal knowledge of the emperor's habits. Beyond seeing him accidentally in the course of his furious drives, he had no opportunity of approaching his person. This honour, it is believed, he might have obtained with the same facility as other travellers; but he is now thankful that it was not applied for. Had he been honoured with the private attentions of the emperor, his lips would have been for ever shut regarding him, unless they could have been honestly opened in the same strain of unmingled panegyric which all travellers take up in speaking of him. Completely untrammelled, however, by the ties which personal kindness would have imposed, the author is at liberty to speak plainly and frankly;

giving the emperor all credit for what is praiseworthy in his character and measures, and censuring without reserve whatever appears to be blameable in the same.

It may be proper to remind the reader, that Nicholas, Emperor and Autocrat of all the Russias,*

* Such is the title by which the sovereigns of Russia are now generally designated. In the time of Peter the Great, his claim to the title of emperor was the subject of many years' negotiation between him and the different courts of Europe. It was asserted, that though his predecessors had been styled Emperors of Muscovy, yet the European powers never meant thereby, to give him a title corresponding in dignity to that of the Emperor of Germany. After many difficulties, however, it was agreed to style him emperor, but without prejudice to the other crowned heads of Europe. The phrase "*all* the Russias," is allusive to the ancient divisions of Little, Great, White, Black, and Red Russia, now *all* united under the general name of the Russian Empire. *Autocrat* is composed of two Greek words, meaning *sole ruler*. The title of Czar—the pronunciation of which is better represented in English by the spelling *Tzar*, or *Tsar*—by which the emperor is also frequently designated, is not, as has been supposed, a corruption of the word *Cæsar*, but a Sclavonic term, signifying *King*. That the title of Czar has no connexion with, and was deemed inferior to that of *Cæsar*, is proved by a fact in the life of the celebrated character known in history by the name of the false Demetrius. When this bold personage assumed the title of Czar, it was readily recognised and confirmed by his protector the King of Poland. But when he went still farther, and claimed the appellation of *Cæsar*, even the complacent Sigismund indignantly refused to gratify his vanity so far. The historian of Peter the Great, referring to the regions where this title was first known, such as Kasan, Siberia, and Astracan; remarks that the title is much more probably derived from the *Tschahs* of Persia, than from the Cæsars of Rome, of whom, in all likelihood, the Tzars of Siberia had never heard on the banks of the Oby.

is *third* son of the unfortunate Paul, and that he succeeded to the throne on the death of Alexander in consequence of some arrangement made by that emperor for the exclusion of his *second* brother Constantine, who was still alive. Alexander has been much blamed for sanctioning an arrangement directly subversive of those very principles of legitimacy for which he had made so many sacrifices throughout his long reign; but in Russia it was no new thing to pass over the direct heir, in favour of one better qualified to govern: for the greatest emperor who ever reigned over it, Peter the Great himself, was called to the throne in the same way; Fœdor having named him his successor, to the exclusion of Ivan, the rightful heir, who, from weakness of intellect, was deemed incapable of governing. In both cases, demonstrations were made in favour of the disinherited. Ivan was for some time regarded as sovereign by one party, but soon gave way to his more energetic brother; and Constantine was proclaimed at Warsaw, as well as supported by a revolt of a portion of the guard, and of the populace of St. Petersburg.

The energy displayed by Nicholas in subduing this rebellion has continued to characterize the whole of his conduct ever since. There is nothing, however, either in the attainments or measures of the Tzar, to justify his admirers in holding him up

as a man of extraordinary, nay, almost superhuman talent. That he possesses restless activity of mind and body—and in a degree, which in a monarch may be not unnaturally mistaken for genius—no one will deny; but we have never discovered in him any other qualities that entitle him to be considered as much above the ordinary average of human character, and certainly none that can entitle him to be pronounced, as he has sometimes been, the greatest genius, the master spirit, of our age. His most prominent qualities, we should say, are decision and firmness; quickness in devising expedients to meet the unforeseen emergencies of the moment, and steadiness in enforcing them. Next to these, is the excess of his passion for reducing every thing to military uniformity. This propensity degenerates almost to a weakness: it is his great aim to give the whole empire the appearance of an encampment. This passion is so well known, that the very children in the streets are made to affect the air military, strutting about in a white cap with red band *à l'empereur*. On entering a school, the boys and girls rise in files, to salute you after the military fashion, and march out as if wheeling to the sound of fife and drum. In the very prisons a dash of the corporal's discipline is visible; and even in the hospitals, you would say the old nurses ape the imperial guard.

The emperor's private habits and general style of living are extremely simple; and the delight which he takes in the society of his children is boundless. Those who have seen the imperial family in their private moments, when free from the constraint of pomp and ceremony to which princes are slaves before the world, speak of them in terms of rapture. An English gentleman who was honoured with many opportunities of entering the august circle, says that more happiness, more affection, more simplicity, it would be impossible to conceive. The unconstrained and innocent amusements of their evenings, contrasted delightfully with the notions usually formed of imperial family scenes. In short, from all that he beheld, it appeared that a kinder husband or a better father than Nicholas does not exist. The emperor, too quick not to perceive what was passing in the mind of his guest as he mused on the scene before him, said one evening, stamping his foot and grinding his teeth, as the unpleasant thought rose to his mind, "I know that I am unpopular in England. They *hate* me—because they think me a tyrant; but if they knew me, they would not call me so. They should see me in the bosom of my family!"

The way in which the imperial family live at some of the country palaces, is also extremely un-

ostentatious; as may appear from the following anecdote:

A stranger who was rambling on the shores of the bay near Peterhof, entered the grounds of what he took to be the villa of some nobleman employed in the neighbouring palace. Meeting with no obstruction in the beautiful walks, he explored them in every direction, and was at last proceeding to get round to the other side of the mansion, to a position where he expected to enjoy an extensive sea-view. In order to effect his object, it was necessary to come nearer the windows than he had intended. At one of them, which was open, with a rich flower-plot before it, sat a lady dressed in the simplest white, and holding in her hand a book, which fortunately engrossed her attention so deeply, that he was able to withdraw without disturbing her. Until he came on the sentinel, whom he had not previously seen, he never suspected that the lady on whom he had been allowed to intrude, and whom he had seen surrounded with as little pomp as a private gentlewoman, was none else than the empress herself.

In person the emperor is tall and well made. Few men of his height (six feet two inches) display such grace and freedom of carriage. In fact, his appearance is so superior that many have bestowed upon him the wide and not easily disputed

compliment of being "the handsomest man in Europe." Being one of the best horsemen of the time, he is never seen to more advantage than when mounted on his favourite steed. Accustomed to command, and to see his commands obeyed with crouching submission, he has acquired the air and mien of majesty more completely than any sovereign of the age. His eye has a singular power: its fierce glance can awe the turbulent, and, it is said, has disarmed the assassin. His manners, however, are far from those of the despot; nothing can be more winning than his attentions, where he wishes to please. No man ever seemed to possess more strongly the power of removing, from those who have access to him, the prejudices which may have been previously entertained against him. The Russians, it is said, see little of his fascinating powers; towards them he dare not be familiar without exciting jealousies which would be fatal to the empire. It is on strangers, passing visiters, that he lavishes his amiability, for with them it can be done without danger, and he is too anxious to stand well with the rest of Europe to allow a foreigner to leave him under an unfavourable impression. Never was even imperial flattery more successful in attaining its aim: the raptures with which his condescension, his frankness, his courtesy, are spoken of by all who

come near him, would indicate that it is not merely the *emperor* but the *man* who triumphs.

The length to which he goes in order to secure friends, and the success of his blandishments, were shown in one instance which was much talked of during our stay in his capital. Monsieur L. W——, a French author of some repute, and well known as a contributor to the *Journal des Débats*, had arrived shortly before us, charged of course to overflowing with all the prejudices of a French *Libéral* against the Emperor and Russia. Some said that the talented Alsacian had been sent by M. Thiers, the prime minister of the time, to spy the nakedness of the land, and to send him information regarding it; but it is much more probable that he was travelling "on his own account," to pick up hints for a tale or two, or matter for a few *vaudevilles*, of which the scene should be laid in Russia; which country was for a time the favourite field of action with M. Scribe and his rivals. At the same time, like a prudent *feuilletoniste* of the well-paying *Journal*, he may have kept a sharp outlook for any thing which would furnish good "articles" for the home-market; and, in fact, the Parisians had soon the pleasure of perusing some very excellent letters of his from St. Petersburg. Let the object of his journey, however, have been what it may, Nicholas soon heard of him through the French ambassador,

M. de Barante, who, himself a distinguished man of letters, was anxious to render every service to a brother in talent. Soon after, all St. Petersburg was amazed to see the emperor paying attention to a French *littérateur*, a "liberal" too, and connected with the very *Débats* which had recently made the violent attack on the emperor's famous Warsaw speech. Not satisfied with conversing with him freely and confidentially in the palace, the condescending monarch was to be seen walking with him in the gardens for a whole hour together, and sent one of his *aides-de-camp* to show him every thing of interest about the capital. Many rumours were instantly abroad on this marvellous subject; but the favourite one was, that the emperor, anxious to reconquer that popularity with the other nations of Europe which his brother Alexander had enjoyed, was about to establish at St. Petersburg another newspaper, in the French language, of which this experienced stranger should be editor, on a handsome salary. The *Journal de Francfort*, faithful and talented though it be, is not answering all the purposes for which it is retained; — for it is now and then under the necessity of advocating Prince Metternich's interests, which do not always agree with those of Count Nesselrode. In these circumstances, the establishment of a newspaper under such a gifted editor, appeared to

the eager *habitués* of the fashionable *salons* a most advisable scheme. But the emperor thought otherwise. He knew how to turn his visiter's talents to better account. He gained his affections — removed his prejudices—made him *his own*; not by bribery, but by the more efficient influence of condescension and kindness;—then, having done all this, sent him where his good opinions would be of more use to the emperor than in Russia—to write and speak favourably of him in France and throughout Europe. So efficiently had he removed his anti-Russian notions, that the next thing we heard of this French convert, was a report from Moscow that he had won the heart and the hand of the daughter of a Russian nobleman in that city. Nay, the emperor's triumph went further:—with such force had he reasoned with him on the sins and follies of liberalism, that, when he returned to France, Louis-Philippe found him completely cured, and has since given him a good diplomatic appointment at one of the German courts.

That hour's walk in the imperial garden has made M. L— W—'s fortune; but we should be sorry to see him becoming as great a flatterer of the emperor as his countryman, Voltaire, was of another Russian sovereign, who had managed him so well, that he gravely wrote of her, "*Une Impératrice vient de donner à ce vaste état des lois*

qui auraient fait honneur à Minos, à Numa, et à Solon, s'ils avaient eu assez d'esprit pour les inventer ! ! La plus remarquable est la tolérance universelle ; la seconde est l'abolition de la torture."

To these two reforms we shall have occasion to allude hereafter; the passage is now quoted merely for the sake of reminding the reader that the formula contained in it has served for all French writers on Russia, from the day it first appeared down to our own. Frenchmen of all descriptions —literary men and soldiers — from Voltaire to Marshal Marmont—have always been the warmest eulogists of Russia. It is among them that the emperor still finds the readiest agents for circulating through Europe all the fine things we see in the journals about him from time to time.

When necessary, however, Nicholas can command flatterers from other nations. An excellent instance of the use he makes of these is afforded by the recent work of Herr von D—, which is so completely crammed with fulsome praise of Nicholas and every thing Russian, that, unless for the information received from friends of the author, we could not have believed the description which he gives of himself in the title-page: *Prussian*, we thought, must have been inserted by mistake for *Russian* counsellor, &c., since no Russian ever could have

gone further in praise of the autocrat and his doings. Its flattery, in fact, is so gross, that in Germany the origin and object of the book were at once detected; but in England, where we are less quick at discovering the emperor's agency, it has been honoured with a translation, and by some readers, perhaps, esteemed valuable as the unbiassed testimony of a liberal foreigner to the excellence of all things Russian. The useful D— will soon be promoted for his book. While in Russia, he was notorious for his outrageous admiration of every thing done, doing, or to be done, in that happy land.

These facts are mentioned to put the public on their guard about all works in which Russia is too vehemently praised; though written by foreigners, they are usually brought out under the kind of influence now explained. The emperor knows well what authors to give his diamond rings to; and if they praise Russia well, he has more substantial rewards than these, the common gifts presented to foreigners who send their books to him.

Being himself thus polite towards foreigners, the emperor very reasonably expects equal politeness on their part. Nay, one who presumes too far is soon brought to his senses. A Prussian officer, who probably thought that in St. Petersburg a Prussian might do as he pleased, one day joined the *cortége* at a review, without having pre-

viously been at court, and was riding about as active as the best of them, till arrested by a message from the emperor, ordering him off the field, with the explanation that he was at all times proud to see foreigners present on such occasions, but thought that they might take the trouble of making themselves known to him before coming there.

When inclined, the emperor succeeds in gaining the affections of his own subjects as completely as those of foreigners. He knows well how to reward fidelity and to inspire enthusiasm. Hence, though not generally popular with the officers of his army, there are some who love him to excess. A young nobleman, of most amiable and winning manners, often said to us, "My brother is toiling in Siberia, a hopeless exile. He was concerned in the revolt which broke out at the emperor's accession. Others of my family are suffering wrong. Yet I love the emperor as much as my own father. How could it be otherwise? Look at these decorations; they were given me from his own hand. He has never allowed an opportunity to pass without rewarding me for any thing I had done to merit his notice; and once, when I had pleased him by the rapidity with which I had raised a corps of recruits to a high state of discipline, he asked me to allow his young son the honour of being enrolled in my troop. These may be trifles to some, but to me they are

links that bind me to him with a force which no thing can break." A little more of this conduct, and he might have the most faithful army in Europe.

With the common soldiers he is highly popular; but it is, above all, among the *mooziks*, the good-hearted fellows with the beards and sheepskins—in other words, it is by the great body of the people—that he is most beloved. He never appears in public without being greeted by rapturous welcome as soon as he is discovered: until our own fair queen ascended the throne, there was no sovereign in Europe whose appearance was hailed with such joy by the people. Individual cases of oppression are overlooked in his general kindness. His anxiety to find out, and generosity in rewarding humble merit, go far in reconciling the poor to his political measures. He is also kind and familiar with them on all public occasions: at the great summer *fête* of Peterhof, where thousands of the people are assembled, he dances and capers amongst them, as merry and free as any goat of them all.

The Russian passion about taking off hats has been already mentioned: the emperor is not without his share of it. The way of saluting him when he passes you in the streets, is, to English ideas, sufficiently slavish. We are not speaking of the

mob, but of gentlemen, who, on such occasions, are compelled to pull up straight and stiff on the pavement—like a frightened Prussian recruit saluting his officer—facing towards his majesty, and there standing, hat in hand, till the carriage has passed. Some of the ambassadors even have adopted this observance; but we should think that an Englishman, gentle or noble, behaves with sufficient respect when he salutes the emperor as he would his own sovereign. If it were a Ho-Tung-Fo, or any barbarian who did not know better, there would be some reason for conforming to the innocent exaggerations of his people.

In cases of public calamity, no one is more sympathizing than the emperor. When a fire occurs, he is sure to be among the first on the spot. Indeed, the way in which he exposes himself on such occasions is surprising. Fear seems to be unknown to him. Many instances could be given of his courage; but never was it more advantageously shown than at the time the cholera broke out in Moscow. It was in that city, as all may remember, that this dreadful scourge first showed itself to any alarming extent in Europe. It had crept slowly up from Asia by the Volga to Nishnei-Novgorod, and thence spread to the second capital of Russia. As yet, little was known of a disease which even now mocks all science: it was

looked upon as a new and more fatal form of the plague. The people were flying in terror. Even the medical men were appalled, and the sick were left without nurse or medicine. At last, these tidings reached the emperor's ears. Without a moment's hesitation he threw himself into his droschky, and posted off to Moscow—visited the sufferers—touched them—went from bed to bed—tasted the medicines — cheered — reprimanded—placed ample funds at the disposal of the authorities;—and by all these decisive steps at once allayed the panic which was giving new violence to a malady that needs but little aggravation. Courage of this kind is of a higher character, and more useful to society, than any that was ever shown on the field of battle.

When the epidemic reached St. Petersburg, he again showed the same heroism, exposing himself in every place where his presence could give confidence: and in this instance his conduct is even still more worthy of admiration, from the fact that, in the interval, he had himself suffered from a very severe attack of the disease. This was not made public at the time; but we are assured of its truth from one who has been informed of it by his majesty's private physician.

Of his presence of mind, and readiness of devising means in the moment of difficulty, many

instances might be given. But on this subject it will be sufficient to recall his conduct during the revolt in favour of Constantine, which, as already stated, was at once put down by the promptitude with which he met it. Many say that in punishing the guilty he showed greater mildness than could have been expected.

His health is of the most robust kind; being, doubtless, greatly aided by the activity of his habits. He thinks nothing of accomplishing in a couple of weeks, a journey which ordinary people would take months to perform. Indeed, generally, among Russians, distance is never taken into calculation when there is question of travelling. In setting out on a five-hundred miles' excursion, therefore, as if it were but a drive to dinner, the emperor is but doing what most of his subjects would do. The people of St. Petersburg always know when he is in the capital, by looking whether the flag be flying on the palace or not; it is hoisted only when the emperor is there. Some mornings, when it has unexpectedly disappeared, they will be told that he is already many hundred miles away, having started in the night in consequence of some sudden intelligence. After the reviews of Kalisch, he posted off through Silesia, and Bohemia, and was in the chambers of the imperial family at Vienna, before a courier

could have arrived to announce his visit. About the time we were leaving Russia, he accomplished a tour to Moscow and Nishnei-Novgorod; then, after visiting Kasan and many of the eastern provinces, came to Little Russia, holding reviews and levees at a great many places by the way; yet he was back again in the capital, from this three or four thousand mile survey, within a few weeks.

He is the only Russian emperor whose travelling habits ever corresponded with the extent of his dominions: he drives literally *ventre-à-terre*, and seldom fails to accomplish twelve miles an hour, even on the unmade roads of the south. His path is generally marked by dead horses. On these occasions he never encumbers himself with retinue or escort: his own light droschky, with six horses, and a similar vehicle following with an *aide-de-camp*, ready to be sent off right or left, constitute the whole of the imperial train.

For such an impetuous traveller, railroads are the only suitable paths. He has, accordingly, already got one formed between St. Petersburg and Tzarkoïe-Celo (opened since we left Russia), and talks of continuing it all the way to Moscow. There being already, however, a beautiful macadamized road on this long line, it is not likely that he will actually attempt a railroad also; but it is highly probable that the first roads which will ever be

established in the other parts of the empire, especially to the south and east of Moscow, where there are now no roads worthy of the name, will be railways, for which the level nature of the country makes it highly suitable. Russia sometimes gains by being behind her neighbours. She has waited long for roads; but may now, at once, get the very best. Notwithstanding the parade made in Germany and France about railroads, there have been greater wonders than that Russia, though she talks less about it, may still get before them in the march of iron.

The emperor's habits in travelling, as indeed at all times, are extremely simple. He eats but little, and always of the plainest. The bed carried with him on these occasions is far from being too luxurious. It is similar to those seen in his bedrooms in the palaces, consisting simply of a hard mattress, on a light iron frame, exceedingly narrow. He carried the same kind of bed all through England. Though sufficiently small and uninviting, it is not quite so uncomfortable as the short fir-wood crib of his good father-in-law, the King of Prussia.

In consequence of his quick movements, he has a way of arriving even at distant places *earlier* than had been announced,—sometimes several days sooner. And then loud is the song of praise and

of wonder. "Oh, what a wonderful emperor! what a great man!" will the courtier cry. "Who but the emperor could travel 300 versts in twenty hours?" echoes the diplomatist. After all, it is but the greatness of a courier.

These rapid journeys surprise nobody but the honest; the rogues are never taken unawares. He thinks to catch people napping by his flights; but those whose consciences tell them that they have need to be afraid of him, are never unprepared. Knowing, from experience, the suddenness of his movements, they are invariably beforehand with him at any place of meeting. All the dishonest are linked hand in hand, and take care to give each other early intimation of their master's motions. But the honest, who are neither intriguers nor defaulters, and do not choose to pay for information of this kind, are generally too late on these occasions. There was a good instance of this while we were in the south: the emperor arrived at a place of rendezvous some days sooner than had been announced: Count ——, an honest man, was too late to see him; but M. le Comte de ——, a rogue, was in great good time. Which of the two would be set down as the most zealous servant of the state?

The emperor's personal interference in almost every kind of business, though in general pro-

ductive of good, occasionally does harm: it paralyzes those who act under him. When any sudden emergency arises, they never know how far to go. For instance, in the frequent case of fire in the capital, little can be done if the emperor is not on the spot; and even when he is present, people are afraid to do more than they are commanded. A melancholy instance of this occurred not long before we reached St. Petersburg. A large wooden booth, a sort of playhouse, had been erected near the palace, during the festivities of the Maslenitsa, or Butter Week, a kind of popular festival, which represents the carnival of southern countries, and is enjoyed by the lower classes as the great season for balls, masquerades, and rioting of every kind. While the performances were going on in broad daylight, this structure suddenly took fire, and the destruction was so rapid, that more than a hundred people—(we have heard the number raised to several hundreds; for in this, as in every thing of a disagreeable nature, the newspapers are never allowed to tell the whole truth)—were killed before they could be extricated. Yet, gentlemen who were on the spot, assert that it would have been possible to have rescued the whole assembly, merely by tearing off the boards outside, in place of leaving the ill-fated revellers to be suffocated in the narrow passages, of which the doors were kept shut

by the very weight of the crowd rushing towards them for escape. When these spectators made a proposal to this effect to the policemen standing by, they beat the meddlers back with their axes: the *emperor had not given instructions* to tear off the boards, and if any thing went wrong in the attempt, the officers would have been *punished for going beyond orders!*

With all the fierce restlessness of disposition, which we have spoken of as characterizing the emperor, he might be expected to be passionately fond of what is considered the favourite amusement of kings and tyrants, the chase; but it appears that he has never followed hound nor horn.

Though his majesty has not cultivated the graces of eloquence, he is said to be both quick and persuasive in argument. Unaccustomed to opposition, however, he is apt to let himself be carried away by passion when contradicted, or when speaking on a subject that rouses his feelings. This was strikingly shown in his famous oration at Warsaw, in the spring of 1836—*the first public speech he ever made:* the Poles, at least, will not be sorry should it be his *last* display of the kind. It was quite unprepared; but being on a subject that touched him keenly, he spoke fluently and impressively.

He is so apt to be carried away by passion in debate, that words often entirely fail him. He has

a way, however, of filling up the pause: in an interview with the French ambassador, the discussion became so warm that his majesty, chafed by opposition, at last, in the agony of unwilling words, summed up his arguments very intelligibly, by striking his hand with great violence on the table—a most impressive figure of speech. On another occasion, when hard pressed for a good argument, he rushed to the window, threw it open, and, pointing significantly to some regiments exercising below, clenched his reasoning with the words, "*Voilà ma garde; ce n'est que la vingtième partie de mon armée!*" The emperor knew well that, after all, force is the best *ultima ratio* of kings.

Though not an enemy to literature nor to literary men, he is not distinguished by any particular taste for letters. His attainments, however, in all useful branches of knowledge,—history, science, languages,—are highly respectable. The only one of the imperial family spoken of as being at all literary, is the Grand-duke Michael, who is said to have written some able remarks, chiefly political, suggested by a visit to Naples many years since.

So far as can be judged by mere outward acts, the emperor's respect for religion is very great. His devoutness while in church is extreme. Some say his part is here overacted; for there is no end to the bowings and salutations between him and

the officiating clergy, when the service is over. No saint's-day, or formality of the church, is ever neglected by him; and in travelling, he never passes a steeple without crossing himself as devoutly as the yemtchik who drives him. The fervour of his superstition, if not of his devotion, is well shown by a recent act, which is spoken of with great applause by the priests. He has added a new saint to the calendar. It appears that some holy man who lived a hundred years ago, had left this earth in all the odour of sanctity, but amid the more exciting subjects which occupied men's minds at that time, his fame was soon forgotten. Lately, however, wonderful things had been performed near the place where he lies interred, in the Government of Voronesh: a talk went forth of the sick being cured, the lame restored, merely by visiting the favoured spot. All this, in due course, came to the ear of the emperor; who forthwith canonized him; and now, to the great edification of the ignorant, his bones are performing miracles every day, among the thousands who are flocking to the shrine.

Of the emperor's toleration in matters of religion, which has been very loudly vaunted, we cannot speak in such enthusiastic terms as many have done. It is true, that under him all sects and religions are tolerated, as they long have been

in Russia, but that members of other sects are promoted with the same rapidity as those of the Greek church, is not true. No one is *compelled* to join the predominant religion; but there is profit in belonging to it notwithstanding. Is it any proof of tolerance on the part of the Russians, to demand that a foreign princess, on allying herself to the emperor, must be baptized into the Greek church, and assume a new name commemorative of the rite? It was a severe trial to the protestant King of Prussia, to see his daughter abandoning her faith, even though she did it to win such dazzling honours.

This narrow-minded policy of the royal family of Russia, is now placed in a stronger light, by the liberality of the royal family of France, who, although themselves strict Roman Catholics, have cordially welcomed to their bosom the amiable protestant princess who will one day wear a crown not less brilliant than that of the Empress of all the Russias.

The emperor also gets great credit for his liberality to the Jews. In fact, any one who will not sing the praises of this liberal despot, is now set down as an enemy to human improvement. Strange liberality, truly, under the cloak of which, iniquities innumerable are committed every day. Beneath the merit of a little good, Russia is allowed

to perpetrate a great deal of evil. Toleration is one of the most praiseworthy characteristics in the policy of any state; but we must not allow it to blind us to great errors and great cruelties. But, after all, what is this boasted toleration of Russia? Before we can raise our admiration of it to the required pitch, she must carry her toleration a little further. At present it implies a most complete abnegation of all political rights, on the part of those who are to be tolerated. To become its objects, men must cease to think like men. The Jews are favoured by the emperor, because, as is well known, they never interfere in affairs of government. Give them opportunity of making money, of carrying on their traffic, and they live as happy under a despotism, as under the freest government that could be framed. Yet, even as regards the toleration manifested toward the Jews in Russia, it should be borne in mind that it is only very lately that they were placed on the more advantageous footing which they at present occupy. Prior to the promulgation of the famous Ukase of 1835, which defined their rights more precisely, none could have told what was their exact position. They can now study at the Universities, take degrees, &c. But even with all these high-sounding liberalities before us—and the

emperor takes good care to have them duly trumpeted through Europe—we deny that the indulgence of the Russian government to the Jews, is by any means of that generous nature which many suppose. Should we call it toleration in England, were the government to say to the Jews, "Get out from amongst us: we give you a certain portion of country in the bleakest and most uncultivated corner of the empire;—go thither, all the twelve thousand of you, and render it fertile by your industry:—pay your taxes, multiply your race, and get rich if you can; but not one of you shall we allow to live in the capital, or even in some of the counties, on the same footing with Christians?"

In English ears, this, we are persuaded, would sound very unlike toleration. Yet such is the toleration we have been taught to praise in the Russian government. For it is notorious, that though in some districts—those which the government is anxious to colonize, and can get nobody else to go to—they enjoy the immunities above alluded to, yet in certain provinces,—Bialystock, for instance, where there are many Jews,—they are treated as a degraded race, and are expressly prohibited by law from leaving their villages, or to settle in any town of the district; and it is equally

well known that no Jews, except a few of great wealth, are allowed to settle in St. Petersburg and some other cities of the empire.

It might also be asked, whether there be much toleration in compelling the Jews to serve in the army—nay, in the navy, too—driving them like wild beasts, with chains on their limbs, and the whip at their shoulders, to enter professions to which, as is well known, they have never been accustomed, and which they mortally abhor.

The abolition of the torture, at an earlier period even than in France and some other countries, is another point for which Russia has long received much praise. What a liberal, what a marvellous country! But this, like the praise of her tolerant spirit, is also somewhat exaggerated. That the torture has been *nominally* abolished, cannot be denied; but for torture, read *knout*, and the practice still exists as vigorously as ever. When the prisoners, arrested on suspicion, are knouted *to make them confess*, what is it but torture with a different name?

Many assert that the emperor's sentiments on political matters, are much more liberal than has usually been represented or expected. If this be true, he is inconsistent in repressing all freedom of opinion so severely among his subjects. Benkendorf, the head of the police, aids him most

powerfully in this work. Political associations or meetings, however secretly conducted, are soon discovered, and mercilessly put down. It is said that he has his spies in every place. Few private parties can be held without some one being present to repeat what is said. All places frequented by foreigners, such as *tables-d'hôte*, hotels, &c., have a well-dressed spy or two appended to them, who keep watch over the conversation of the guests, and note those with whom they associate.

That the Russian police is not to be tampered with, was shown by its conduct on a recent occasion to a distinguished Englishman, commanding the armies of one of the greatest powers in the East. During the last reviews at Kalisch, Sir —— ——, then on his way to London, turned off from the direct route through Gallicia and Silesia, in order to witness a sight which could not but possess unusual interest for a soldier. Being a man of very remarkable personal appearance, he soon attracted the attention of the police at Kalisch. Inquiries were made about his object in visiting the place. He referred to his passport as a sufficient security for his character; but was answered that a *special* permission was necessary for all coming there. Having no further papers to tell much about him, the affair began to look serious. Arrest, and worse consequences were threatened, when he

at length thought of appealing, as an Englishman, to the Duke of Cumberland. His royal highness, however, refused to have any thing to do with him; so that matters now looked more suspicious than ever. In the eyes of the impartial police, there could no longer be any doubt that the tall stranger had come there on some conspiracy, and must be dealt with accordingly. Fortunately, however, just when extreme measures were about to be resorted to, he learnt that there was another English nobleman among the visiters,—one to whom even the humblest of his countrymen could never have appealed in vain,—the late Duke of Gordon; who at once exerted all his influence to free the stranger from his awkward position, and made the emperor himself acquainted with his real character. Thanks to the Duke, the gallant soldier was now honoured with every attention, and urged to take that share in the martial festivities to which his rank and reputation entitled him. But, if the story as we had it at Constantinople be correct, he was so indignant at the treatment he had previously received, that even imperial entreaties could not induce him to remain an instant after he had fully vindicated his character.

In nothing is the vigilance of the emperor's police more actively displayed, than in its severity in all that concerns the press. Books, and publi-

cations of every kind, are under the strictest censorship. Not a line can be printed, not even the prices of tallow and sugar, without the permission of government. As to any thing like free discussion in the newspapers, it is out of the question in a country where, as already mentioned, few newspapers are allowed except the official organs of the ministry. In regard to the admission of *foreign* journals, however, there is more liberality than we were prepared for. All the German newspapers of any repute are to be seen at the clubs: such as the *Staats-Zeitung*, the *Allgemeine-Zeitung*, the *Hamburger Correspondent*, the *Börsen-Halle*, with its *Critische Blätter*, the *Journal für Ausländische Litteratur*, and the *Freimüthige*, some of which, as is well known, often contain articles of a liberal tendency. The only French newspaper which we met with was the *Journal des Débats;* and the only English one permitted in public places is the *Morning Post*. *Galignani's Messenger*, which had formerly been admitted, was excluded about the time of our visit, to the great regret of the English, who found it by far the most useful of all the continental papers. Yet as each number was carefully examined at the post-office, and kept back if it contained any thing unpalatable to the government, many of its readers found it much less tantalizing to be without it altogether.

Foreign newspapers of all kinds are generally detained many hours at the post-office, to give time for their perusal before being delivered. Such is the jealousy of the authorities, that even in private English families, we saw few of our newspapers. *Chambers's Journal*, and some other periodicals, which do not deal in politics, are admitted. In general, however, English books do not seem to be very strictly prohibited. At Dixon's, the English bookseller, we found copies of nearly all the English works reprinted on the continent; that is to say, every thing worth reading. Brieff, one of the most respectable publishers in St. Petersburg, receives most of the new French works; and it is said that none of the importers of books are much troubled by the censor, government having a general confidence in their honour, which of course they take care not to abuse. Books of travels that treat of Russia, especially English ones, are very severely prohibited, unless they contain nothing but praise of the emperor and his people. Yet others, sometimes, find their way in. *Byron* is strictly forbidden; he made too free with Russia in some of his poems, and said too much about that troublesome thing liberty, to be a favourite with the police. In spite of all their care, however, we heard of many a smuggled copy of him in German,—which every body can read

who reads at all. He is the favourite poet of the Russians.

Knowing that the stage is also under a strict censorship, we were not a little surprised to see a piece performed, which, though we could not understand the dialogue, was evidently very severe on the malpractices of some government functionaries. It is called the *Reviser;* and is meant as a satire on the practice of taking bribes, which is so prevalent among Russian functionaries. A young spendthrift, reduced to his last sixpence, is mistaken in a provincial town, to which he had removed, for the important personage sent down to *revise* the accounts of tax-collectors, government contractors, &c. No sooner has this misapprehension become general, than his prospects are completely changed. Wealth, in the shape of bribes, pours in upon him so fast, that he knows not how to dispose of it. One person offers him a hundred pounds to let his books pass unexamined. Another brings double the sum, to purchase his silence about an acknowledged deficit. A third great man puts his castles and horses at his disposal, and a fourth gives him his choice of his daughters in marriage, with the promise of a rich dowry to increase the charms of the favoured fair. In short, all goes so prosperously, that our hopeful youth, from being the most despairing, begins to be the most arrogant

of men. Yet such things, it appears, are too common in Russia not to be understood and relished by the poor taxpayers, at whose expense all this is done.

Now all this freedom on the part of a dramatist, surprised us greatly in a country where we did not expect to hear the smallest allusion on the stage, at least in the way of censure, to any thing connected with government; but the mystery was solved, when we were assured that, numerous and powerful though they be, the class alluded to in this piece had not been able to procure its suppression, for the very good reason that it had found favour in the eyes of the emperor, who comes to laugh at it as often as any grumbling liberal in all St. Petersburg. He patronises it because it aids him in a part of his policy, which will be discussed after we have offered a few remarks on the influence which the example of the court exercises on the nobles of the empire.

CHAPTER XXIV.

INFLUENCE OF THE COURT.

Great improvement in the morals of the Russian nobles—Chiefly attributable to the empress—Way in which she has produced the change—Splendour of the court entertainments—Banquets—Receptions—Most honoured guests—Effect which her example has had on the education of the daughters of the nobility—Great pains taken with her own family—The emperor's attention to the education of his sons—Its influence on that of the young nobles—Many Germans of princely rank visit the court—Prince Maximilian of Leuchtenberg—Motives of the emperor in choosing him to be his son-in-law—His character—The extravagance of the court injurious as an example to the nobles—Their burdens—Painful reflections on witnessing the splendour of the palaces.

FROM having been the most profligate of all the courts of Europe, the imperial circle of St. Petersburg has now become the purest and most exemplary. The world has not yet forgotten the foul tales with which the very mention of some of the Muscovite sovereigns was once invariably associated; but, happily, at the imperial court of the present day it is now as fashionable to be virtuous,

as it was in the days of other rulers to be immoral.

The emperor himself deserves a great share of the merit of having accomplished this much-needed reform in Russian manners; for, whatever may be the truth of the whispers regarding his private conduct, it is undeniable that in public he has at all times most strenuously discountenanced every tendency to open licentiousness or impropriety among the members of his court.

Of the merit of this good work, however, the greatest share is due to the amiable and high-minded empress. Brought up amid the bitter but wholesome lessons of adversity, the daughter of the ill-fated Queen of Prussia carried with her to the throne those principles of true morality and religion which, when they once have been firmly rooted, can neither be shaken by misfortune nor deadened by prosperity. She had not long been raised to an elevation whose splendours would have dazzled a more ordinary or a less religious mind, and deprived it perhaps of that delicate perception of right and wrong which in lower station might have remained unimpaired, before she discovered that many things in the manners and conduct of the Russian nobles greatly needed amelioration. Under the correct and exemplary reign of the Emperor Alexander, a change for the better had

already begun to appear; but it had only begun. There was still wanting to the wives of the Russian nobility, the sanctifying influence of a pure female court; an example of correctness in the first lady of the empire. This they had now obtained, in one who knew well the mighty extent of the influence, either for good or for evil, which her elevated station conferred, and who at the same time was not ignorant that there were dangers as well as difficulties awaited her, in attempting to bring about a change among those who had hitherto never heard the voice of entreaty, far less that of reproof.

Sincerely impressed, however, with a sense of the necessity which existed for a reform, the empress was determined to spare no effort in the noble task which she had assumed. The only question with her was, how could the laudable object best be accomplished? It was here that the strong good sense of the empress came to the aid of her zeal. A less judicious reformer of manners and morals, invested like her with almost boundless power for carrying her wishes into effect, would have thought only of the way in which that power could be most violently employed in accomplishing her wishes. But in place of prohibitions and proscriptions, she chose the gentler and more persuasive method of reforming by *example;* a course

which was the more effectual, that in Russia good example from an empress had unhappily been but too rare.

It is then by a strict adherence to propriety in her own conduct, and firmness in refusing to countenance those, however high their rank, who had become noted for levity, that the excellent Alexandra Feodorovna has at length succeeded in making her court the resort of morality without hypocrisy, and of decorum without moroseness.

During the season at which we visited Russia the court is not held at St. Petersburg. It is only in winter that it is seen in its full magnificence. All that the empire contains of noble and wealthy are then drawn to the capital, by the gorgeous festivities which are continued without intermission, till the return of summer again permits the imperial family to enjoy the comforts and tranquillity of country life.

The entertainments given at the court are on a scale of splendour, surpassing all that is now to be seen in any other part of the world. We have heard a member of one of the royal families of Germany say, that the marvels which he had witnessed in the Winter Palace could only be compared to the fictions of the Arabian Nights. The wide and beautiful entrances lined with crowds of attendants in

the richest liveries—staircases of the whitest marble glittering with men and armour, arranged in groups the most tasteful and impressive—the vast size and splendour of the apartments, lighted by thousands of costly lamps—the ceiling and doors one blaze of gilding—the roofs supported by columns composed of the rarest materials, and in some instances glowing with precious stones—the walls covered with crystal mirrors that multiply the objects a thousand times, or even in some instances composed of lapis lazuli of enormous price—the richest furniture that artist's skill can produce—vases of the most beautiful forms, and of materials which kings and emperors alone can aspire to—the panels hung with the most famed performances of the pencil—and beneath them, the fairest creations of the classic chisel, mingling with all that modern art has contributed of beautiful or sublime—in short, whatever the most uncontrolled fancy can imagine, or the most boundless wealth command, are here assembled with a profusion that dazzles even the accustomed eye.

The condescension and even kindness displayed by the imperial hosts on such occasions win every heart. The emperor, all life and frankness, is every where, and has a happy word for every one; while the empress, ever graceful and dignified, presides with inexpressible charm in her own

peculiar sphere. Every member of their family follows the gracious example set before them by those whom they naturally look up to as the first beings on earth.

The splendour displayed by the guests at these gay festivals is in every way worthy of their illustrious entertainers. Ladies never appear in any but the most expensive dresses; while their lords glitter in rich stars and uniforms of every variety.

On some occasions the officers of all the troops in garrison at St. Petersburg have the honour of being entertained by their imperial majesties. These, however, are looked upon as mere public banquets, not as fashionable receptions, which are exceedingly select. At these latter, none but the highest nobility and the families of the ministers of state are present; nor could any other class meet the enormous expenditure which they occasion. Of the official personages, some have not private fortunes sufficient to qualify them for such display; but their salaries being very large—perhaps the largest paid to any ministers in Europe—they are able, while in office, to shine with the greatest in the empire.

The names of the Cheremetieffs, Apraxines, Benkendorffs, Naryschkines, Strogonoffs, Pasch-

koffs, Volkonskys, Lievens, Troubetskoys, &c., need not be repeated as among those who are the most frequent and most honoured guests at court. It should be stated, however, that many of the native families who are the most distinguished supporters of his throne really have very little acquaintance—if we may use so humble a phrase—with the emperor. The intercourse on these occasions is on the whole so formal, that strangers, who have only been a fortnight in St. Petersburg, sometimes see more and know more of the emperor and his family, than those who have spent the best part of their lives at court.

It must not be concealed, however, that these frequent opportunities of associating with the imperial family, have been productive of great good in regard to the education of the families of the nobility. In this important matter the example of the empress has been of the very greatest consequence. Formerly, the education of females in the highest families of the nobility was of the most superficial nature. They acquired all that could "tell" in society; every showy accomplishment was prosecuted with the greatest anxiety: but to useful knowledge—to the acquirement of sound principles of religion and morals—so little time was given, that the education of a Russian lady of

high rank was not unjustly said to be limited to the study of French and the art of handling the fan. The young beauty was most thoroughly instructed in the science of turning her personal charms to the greatest account; but while the mode of captivating a lover was so carefully instilled, the more important one of retaining his affections as a husband was left entirely out of view.

Such a state of things could not be expected to continue under an empress who belonged to the most highly-educated of all the royal families of Europe, and who had herself received the most complete education that ever a princess enjoyed. The sincerity of her zeal in this vital cause was soon made apparent, by the great pains which she took with the education of her own daughters. The Russians, ever prone to imitate those whom they look up to, soon followed the example; and, having once been taught the importance of storing the female mind with knowledge of a higher character, they have latterly bestowed such care on this good task, that now, perhaps, there is no country in the world where the daughters of the nobility receive a better education than they do in Russia.

What the empress has done for her daughters, the emperor has not less faithfully performed for his sons. They have all been educated under his own

eye. The time and labour bestowed by him in this department of his parental duties would appear altogether inconsistent with his devotion to so many other serious affairs. For, not satisfied with having provided for them in every department the best masters that could be found in Europe, he himself bestows many hours in superintending the studies of his promising sons. As might be expected from what we have said of his martial tastes, he is especially zealous in making them acquainted with all the branches of a military education. His oldest son, the hereditary grand-duke, Alexander Nicholaevitch, now in his twenty-first year, is said to have a most complete knowledge of the science which, to all appearance, will for many years be the most important that the sovereigns of Russia can acquire. Having been brought up with the most hardy habits, the heir-apparent can endure every kind of fatigue, and expose himself to every kind of weather. This hardening process, indeed, would even appear to have been carried too far; for it is now alleged that the health of the young prince has been broken by it, though not, happily, to such extent as to excite any serious alarm.

The care taken by the emperor in educating his sons, as in the case of the empress just mentioned, has also been very beneficial as an example to

the nobility in training theirs. The Russian nobles have long been distinguished for the pains bestowed in educating their sons; and with the improvements recently made, their system is now probably as complete as any course of private education—for such, generally speaking, it still is—can ever be made.

From the warm affection which subsists between all the members of the royal family to which the empress belongs, there is scarcely a season passes that some Prussian prince does not visit St. Petersburg. Indeed, from this and its other numerous connexions with the royal families of Germany, the court is almost constantly attended by some of the younger scions of Teutonic royalty. One of these princely knights-errant, Maximilian of Leuchtenberg, it appears, has been fortunate enough to gain the heart of the fair princess who doubtless aided in drawing so many of the gay and gallant to her father's court. Who would have ventured, twenty, or even ten years since, to predict that the imperial house of Russia would ally itself with the family of Napoleon? Truly politics work changes which surpass the calculations of the warmest lover of the marvellous. And yet politics can have had little to do with this match. Some, indeed, may think that, if the prince himself be without political prospects or name—in fact, little

more than a private gentleman—yet he has sufficient recommendation even to an ambitious father, as the brother-in-law of him who must soon be king of Sweden, and the near relative of him who is actually king of Greece—two countries in which Russian interests are deeply involved. But it is probable that, in selecting the son of Eugène Beauharnois for his son-in-law, Nicholas has consulted the feelings of the father more than those of the emperor—preferred the competitor for his daughter's hand who was most likely to make her happy, to the one that would merely have made her great. Nor are his expectations likely to be deceived. When we saw him, some years since, Prince Maximilian of Leuchtenberg was one of the gayest of the many gay courtiers who then graced one of the northern courts; and those who had opportunities of knowing his character, spoke of him in terms of warm praise. A good heart and amiable manners, both of which he possesses in an eminent degree, will be valuable qualities in the Viceroy of Poland—the dignity to which, public rumour asserts, he is, ere long, to be raised.

Whether these visits of the princes of Germany to a court so splendid as that of St. Petersburg tend to make them better pleased with the sober gaieties of their own circles, is a question for others to decide. Of the effect, however, which familiarity

with these splendours produces on the native nobility, we may state that it is far from favourable. That the example of the court has been most beneficial in some important respects, has been already shown; but that in some points its example is decidedly prejudicial, is strongly asserted by many; and in nothing is it more prejudicial than in fostering that turn for extravagance and love of show which are naturally so strong in every Russian breast, that it would be more desirable to check than to encourage them. Accustomed, in their visits to court, to see nothing but the most unbounded extravagance, they carry back the lesson with them into private life; each rivalling with the other, who shall go furthest in the magnificence of their tables, and their general style of living. The natural consequence of this reckless mode of life has been, that many of the nobles, with incomes nominally of enormous amount, are in reality involved in the greatest difficulties. So far from leading the happy, enviable existence which the world would ascribe to them, they are, in fact, leading the most miserable life that can be imagined—that of being compelled by their vanity to maintain a hollow show, which, though it may add to the splendour of the imperial court, entails only misery on the families of its victims.

In one sense, indeed, the evil consequences of the example which he gives, recoil on the emperor himself; for those of the public functionaries who have neither private fortune nor official salary sufficient to enable them to cope with their neighbours in this race of extravagance, manage to find means of doing so, by robbing the state. There can be no doubt that the ruinous style which they are forced to keep up on these occasions, is one great cause of the extreme and shameless dishonesty which, as will be hereafter shown, prevails among Russian functionaries to a most deplorable extent.

Nor is it possible to avoid remarking, in connexion with all these splendours, that the means of supporting them are wrung from the poor and the oppressed. How many serfs must toil—how many millions must eat the bitter bread of sorrow—before the emperor can fill his halls with ornaments that would purchase kingdoms, and keep up a show to which history yields no parallel! Such, at least, were the reflections that rose to our minds, as we trod his magnificent saloons, glittering with more than barbaric pomp. In the palace of a sovereign who reigns over a free people, these thoughts will not intrude; for its splendours are but the reflected grandeur of the nation which has voluntarily contributed them. But in Russia it is im-

possible to forget that the magnificence of its mighty ruler is levied from those who have no voice to plead their cause—no arm to shield them from rapacity and wrong.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE EMPEROR'S REFORMS—OFFICIAL BRIBES—CONDITION OF THE SERFS.

Shameful prevalence of bribery—Judges—Magistrates—Anecdotes of a police director—Nothing can be done without bribing—Difficulty of changing the system—Attempt to liberate the serfs—Their present degraded condition—Sold with the land—May be bought as servants — Extreme difficulty of arriving at the truth on these subjects in Russia—Injurious effects of slavery on masters as well as the sufferers themselves—Danger of keeping the people longer in slavery.

Of all the important measures by which the short reign of the Emperor Nicholas has already been distinguished, none are so likely to hand down his name with honour to posterity as those which he has adopted for reforming the many abuses which exist in the general administration of the empire. Some indeed may wonder to hear his name mentioned in connexion with reform of any kind; but that he is nevertheless, in many things, both a bold and persevering reformer, none who know his character can for a moment doubt.

As the greatest and most obvious abuse of all, he has strenuously set himself to reform the bribing system referred to at the close of a former chapter. In spite of all his efforts, however, bribery in public offices still prevails, to a degree unheard of in other countries. Even in Austria, where they understand such things very well, they are mere tyros in the science, compared with the Russians. It grinds the poor, and impoverishes the rich; it is practised in every branch of the administration, from the lowest clerk to the highest minister; it paralyzes industry, enterprise, merit, in every corner of the empire.

If you commence a lawsuit, however just your cause, it remains undecided for years, unless you bribe the judges again and again. If you want a government contract, the heads of the department must be propitiated with half of your calculated profits. If a situation is procured, it must be paid for. If you wish to have your passport, especially in any of the remote provinces, a thousand difficulties can be thrown in the way, till money removes them. Thus a foreigner, in a distant part of the empire, who wanted to leave the country, had waited upwards of a month without being able to obtain his papers from the governor's secretary, who always sent evasive answers. His patience being at length exhausted, he made a journey of a hundred miles,

to wait on the governor himself. He was received with open arms, feasted, honoured as if he had been a bosom friend; but still his passport made no progress, until means were found to give the applicant a hint that he had forgot to accompany his letter with the customary bribe. The money was paid—the well-bred governor perhaps pocketing half of it; and the traveller got off without further delay. In all probability, money would have been equally powerful had he been a murderer, only that he would have had more to pay.

The sums drawn in the shape of bribes by some people in office are quite enormous, not only in the capital, but in the provinces also. There is a town in the south of Russia where the director of police has an income of 80,000 roubles a-year (3200*l.*), though his regular salary is only 6000 roubles, or 240*l.* All over the empire, the people holding such situations are notorious for their rapacity; but this personage enjoys peculiar opportunities for swelling his booty, having a monopoly for furnishing the prisons, lighting the streets, &c. Every inhabitant must make him presents, to avoid arbitrary interference with their affairs. But the largest item of all is paid by thieves, who thus purchase their escape from justice, in the face of complaints strongly and frequently urged by the most respectable residents. It is quite impossible

to obtain redress for any grievance: better leave it untold, if you wish to avoid new loss.

One of the anecdotes regarding this worthy illustrates so admirably the state of matters in Russia, that we give it as a specimen, from among many which could be repeated. Our informant, a merchant living at the place in question, had repeatedly missed money from his cash-box. Suspecting a man in his office, he resolved to watch him; and at last, after losing 800 roubles in the experiment, obtained sure proof that he was the thief. A police-officer being sent for, the person's trunk was searched, and 650 of the roubles found in it; but neither restitution of the money, nor punishment of the offender, could ever be obtained. The officer, indeed, carried off the cash, and made an able report to his chief; but good care was taken that it should never find its way back again to the rightful owner, who was forced to let the matter lie unagitated, knowing that to pursue it more would only be expending money in vain.

Further to show the purity of Russian justice, the same gentleman mentioned that a fellow once came to him with a forged paper, demanding money in the name of the police; it was paid without suspicion. But the visit being soon repeated, he suspected that there was something wrong, and put some questions to the messenger,

who instantly took guilt to himself, and fled. The printed paper and police stamps being both found to be forgeries, the offender was taken into custody, and the gentleman who had been the means of exposing him was thanked a hundred and a hundred times by the head of the department, who said that the man was an old officer, known for his tricks.

Surely this delinquent was made an example of? By no means; in place of being punished, he is now again in the pay of the police. He had gained enough by his forgeries to be able to bribe the authorities to silence and connivance.

These are only weak specimens of what bribery can achieve in Russia. It can do every thing; and the misfortune is, that without it nothing can be done. If you apply for the most trifling service, or the smallest piece of information at any public office, it must be paid for. When we asked a bookseller why he had not thought of publishing a proper guide to St. Petersburg, such as those which are to be found of every other capital, he said that the undertaking would ruin him. Before he could procure the necessary intelligence, in that accurate form which alone could render such a book of any value, he would have to expend at least 30,000 roubles in bribes to the clerks and principals of the various establishments. The bribes expended in

getting up a small and inefficient thing of the kind, containing only a few sheets, had amounted to ten times the cost of the printing and paper of the whole edition.

It is notorious that, in some of the public offices, many are so poorly paid, that in order to subsist, they must have recourse to the taking of bribes; and it is equally notorious that some of these gentlemen who have only 30*l.* a-year of salary, drink their claret and champagne. When an inferior officer is detected taking money, his master may make a pretence of punishing him; but at the same time he secretly encourages the practice, by pocketing a share of the spoil.

It is this universality of the system which renders it so difficult to sweep it away. Were there only the heads of departments to deal with, it would soon be cured; but besides the few hundred leaders in this rapine, there is an army of many thousand subordinates to contend with. Before their ravages can be checked, *every salary in the empire must be raised tenfold.* With all his determination, therefore, Nicholas has not yet been able to clear out this worse than Augean stable. As in every similar case, the contemplated reform is very unpopular with those on whom it may fall. The attempt is also attended with considerable danger to the emperor himself; but his character

is sufficient guarantee that he will not shrink from it on that account. It is the misfortune of a despotic government that no great reform can ever be accomplished under it without violence; so that, in all probability, the stream with which this nuisance will be swept away, must be one of blood.

That Nicholas can be *impartial* in his vengeance —that rank will not save an offender when once his guilt is known—was well proved the other day, by the case of a collector of taxes, who, though a man of good family, and invested with a high military title, was degraded to the ranks, and sent to Siberia, for peculation.

That the functionaries who take bribes from the people should also be guilty of robbing the sovereign, is a transition so natural, that none will be surprised to hear this also enumerated in the list of Russian grievances. In fact, peculation prevails to an enormous extent. Those who have the public money passing through their hands, plunder in the most unblushing manner; and contractors cheat the government as if it were a bounden duty to do so. This is one of the most melancholy characteristics of the Russian. He seems to be utterly incapable of distinguishing between right and wrong, in regard to the public money. Neither banishment, nor fear of exposure and loss of rank, can keep him from turning his position to account,

as it is politely termed. The difficulty of finding Russians who will act in office with any thing like honesty, is one of the principal reasons why so many foreigners are still employed in the highest offices of the state. Whenever a Russian is appointed to a public situation, or obtains a government contract, he begins to consider how he may best impose on the emperor, and enrich himself. But Nicholas has at last stepped in; and, from the vigilance now employed in watching the public robbers, it will no longer be so easy to supply the navy with tar little better than ditch-water, nor to mount the cavalry in leather that would not stand a week's hard wear.

Another reform, which puts the emperor's character even in a still more favourable light, is his desire to LIBERATE THE PEASANTRY, and to raise their character in every way. He has not directly interfered with the nobles on this subject, but has set them the example, accompanied by a pretty intelligible hint that he expects it to be followed. On all the estates of the crown the serfs have been liberated, and care is taken to qualify them for freedom by education and indulgent treatment.

The great objection raised to this scheme by the nobles, is the same which has always been made in other countries to attempts of this nature;

namely, that *the people do not wish for freedom;* and, as a proof of this, reference is made to some experiments of last century, when the peasants in certain districts were enfranchised, and attempts made to introduce a better system of agrieulture amongst them. Instead of showing themselves proud of their free state, many first sold and drank the value of their new implements, and then, complaining that they did not know what to do with liberty, petitioned that they might be again placed under the lash and the goad. But this is only the natural consequence of slavery; it always makes men unfit to appreciate the blessings of freedom. If the nobles were sincere in seconding the emperor, the true way to remedy this would be to teach their humble brethren the value of liberty. They should begin by establishing schools more extensively, or otherwise labour honestly to prepare the minds of the people for independence; and among the things which they might teach them, ought to be the fact that the bondage of the lower classes is not an old and traditional usage in Russia, but an innovation of comparatively modern date. There had always been *domestic* slaves in Russia; but it was only in the reign of Fœdor Ivanovitch, the last Tzar of Muscovy, who died in 1591, that the *peasants*, the great mass of the people, became serfs (*servi glebæ adscripti*).

Through the influence of his talented minister, Godunoff, they lost the right of passing, as interest or fancy dictated, from one landowner to another, and have ever since been compelled to *remain on the soil where they are born*, or, which is the same thing, they cannot leave it without their master's permission, who continues to the last hour of their life, to draw a portion of their earnings, in whatever part of Russia they may be located. The landlord can transplant them wherever he pleases on his own property, but it is a high crime to sell or buy slaves by auction, or in any other way, *apart from the land.* The owner of the soil on which they were born, is compelled to support them in sickness and old age.

In certain parts of the country there would appear to be some exceptions to the law just mentioned, regarding the sale of peasants being authorized only when the land is sold: for we were distinctly told in the south of Russia, by English families long resident there, that Russians of a certain rank are allowed to buy slaves, even when not buying land. No merchant, no foreigner, no Jew, is permitted to do so; but any Russian, who has attained the military rank of major, can purchase slaves to be his servants. He can also, in some manner, transfer his rights to others; for many foreigners get a friend to buy slaves for

them, and retain them as servants in his name. Indeed, unless people have recourse to this system, they can scarcely get servants at all. "Why don't you buy slaves?" was the question put to an English lady, when she complained that she was at a loss for servants. Her objection about her principles not allowing her to employ slaves, was regarded as mere English prejudice. Even if our fair countrywoman could have got over her repugnance to this traffic in human blood, she would have found, what all others find, that such servants are the worst that can be got.

It is necessary to state, however, that on the subject now under discussion, we found it impossible to obtain any really satisfactory information. English people, of course, having no object to gain either by exaggerating or concealing the truth, all agree in telling the same story on this question; but no two Russians ever agree on this, or, we may say, on any other point connected with the usages and institutions of the country. To get at the truth in Russia, even regarding the simplest subject of curiosity, is literally impossible. In free countries truth is to be got at by a stranger, if he takes the trouble of inquiring in the proper quarter; but here the more he inquires, the more is he bewildered. What he writes down one day, he is forced to contradict the very

next. Many instances might be given of the ignorance which prevails here, regarding the subjects most likely to interest a stranger, and especially regarding public matters, or, at least, of the contradictions which we heard concerning them: but we shall now mention only one. It happened, during a discussion about the public revenue of Russia, in a large party of most intelligent people. Some maintained that it amounted to 34,000,000*l.* sterling, and maintained it stoutly. They were only making it more than twice what it really is! In fact, every Englishman who has visited this or any other continental country, where there is no free press, must have been struck with the great difficulty there is in learning the truth, even on the most public affairs. The stranger is confounded with statements the most contradictory, from people who ought to be equally well informed. This will always be the case where men get little thanks for knowing any thing beyond the mere routine of their duty—where no discussion is allowed on questions connected with government arrangements,—and, above all, where the press is not allowed to circulate correct information.

Returning, however, to the subject from which we have digressed, we may mention that on one point connected with the serfs, all our informants were agreed; namely, that though only certain

classes can hold slaves without buying the property they belong to, yet any person who has the means, may buy a property with slaves on it. It would also seem well established, that the total number of serfs in the empire amounts to 21,000,000. Of these a portion is liberated every year; some, but only very few, of the nobles following now and then the example of the crown. Thus, it appears, that in the course of 1836, about 352 were liberated, making the whole number of enfranchised serfs up to that time 67,736.

Shopkeepers and traders worth thousands a-year may be seen in St. Petersburg, who are still but slaves. It is even said that such find some advantage in being thus bound, and would not change their thraldom even were it in their power to do so. But this we cannot comprehend; it may be good Russian reasoning, but is scarcely common sense.

One thing, however, connected with these serfs, we can fully understand; which is, that, whatever may be the blessings of slavery to those who remove from their native huts, those who remain on the property are in a most wretched state. In most instances there is no bargain between the landlord and his people. He may take as much or as little of their money or their crop as he pleases; there is nothing but self-interest to hin-

der him from taking all. The poor wretches are ground to the very dust. Besides the stripes already spoken of, they are subject to banishment, and even severer punishment, at their tyrant's pleasure. Of course, he has an interest in retaining as many of them on the estate as possible. Like a farmer with his horses or his oxen, he cannot kill nor drive them out to the waste, without injuring his own revenue: for, besides the amount of his income, the value of his property, when he wishes to sell it, also hinges on the number of his dependants. The people are counted over to the purchaser, like so many sheep.

We even doubt, whatever the *theory* of the law may be, whether in *practice* a nobleman has not power of life and death over his serfs. If he commit murder it is almost impossible to punish him. In short, spite of the sentimental rhapsodies which have been published on this subject, the connexion between master and slave in this country, is unredeemed by a single alleviation. Bad as slavery was in our West India possessions, we know that there were *some* happy slaves, just because there were some kind masters who took an interest in alleviating the sad lot of their dependants: but in Russia, we did not meet with a single well-attested instance of a landlord having adopted a philanthropic scheme for improving the condition of those

whom he has robbed of their birthright. It is not asserted that there are no instances of kindness—that all are cruel; but that there is nothing like enlightened, or well-organized benevolence among the greater part of the proprietors, toward the unhappy creatures whose fate is in their hands, was the assertion made to us by every Russian with whom we spoke. It might be thought that nothing could be more close than the tie between master and slave in this country—that were it only from mere sentiment, if from no higher motive, a proprietor would be continually doing something for those on his estate. But, alas! slavery brutalizes all who come in contact with it. To its debasing influence alone can we attribute the fact, that we never once heard Russians of rank speak with anything like affection of slaves. Nay, they speak of the lower orders with contempt—with something of a fierce hatred even; as if they were worse than brutes, not worthy of a moment's regard from rational beings!

These remarks, however imperfect, will give some idea of the system which the emperor is labouring to reform. In doing so, he is only following out the policy of some of his predecessors, who also wished to increase the number of freemen; and, as a first step, established those Foundling Hospitals which are among the most remarkable

institutions in Russia, but are in no respect more remarkable than as being literally nurseries of freemen. The many thousands annually educated in these places become perfectly free. It would be well for the nobles if they would follow, ere it be too late, the example set them by the government; for knowledge makes its way in by narrow channels: strictly as their frontiers appear to be sealed, a better light may penetrate even this Russian darkness, and hasten the day when the nobles may wish that, like their emperor, they had foreseen the danger of attempting to enslave twenty millions of men, whose revenge will be cruel in proportion to the cruelties they have endured.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE EMPEROR AND HIS ARMY.

His longing for military fame—Love of reviews, &c.—Makes a plaything of his troops—Amount of the Russian army—How composed—Cannot be relied upon—Jew soldiers—The imperial guard—Finland sharpshooters—Russian compared with Prussian soldiers—The reviews at Kalisch—Pay—Length of service, &c.

ANXIOUS as the emperor may be to accomplish the reforms alluded to in the preceding chapter, they occupy but little of his time compared with his military schemes.

It is, after all, for honours of another kind that his heart most ardently burns. To be distinguished as a soldier, "a conqueror," would be dearer to him than all the fame he could ever obtain as the "redresser of wrongs." He is now the only monarch in Europe of decidedly warlike tastes. He is never happy unless when occupied with some military pageant: when he cannot get up the real game of war, he tries to comfort himself

with its image. In 1835, for instance, he dragged the grave King of Prussia into the play, and a costly bout of it they had at Kalisch. The following year, he had a camp of 40,000 men near St. Petersburg, where all the ceremonies of a campaign were gone through with so much solemnity, that an aide-de-camp of his Prussian majesty attended the whole time, and daily sent a report of the movements to Berlin, just as if a real war had been goingoon. In 1837 he had reviews and manœuvres at Vosnecensk, in the south of Russia, on a scale seldom surpassed even in actual warfare. From thence he visited Sebastopol, where he took part in some manœuvres of the Black Sea fleet; and afterwards proceeded to Tcherkass, where he met a division of his Cossack troops, some 60,000 strong, and presented to them his son, who has always had the title of Hetman, or chief of the Cossacks, but had never appeared amongst them in that capacity. He next started for Taganrog, and there closed his military shows for 1837, by reviewing 65,000 Cossacks of another tribe. In 1838, we have seen, with the help of his deluded victims, before the walls of Herat, he has made some approach to more serious pastime. What the *programme* of his military amusements for the year 1839 may be, a few months will show; but those who know his character best, will be much

surprised should he fail in getting up a real war to occupy his next autumnal leisure.

These military shows create an immense drain on the treasury. It may be remarked, however, in regard to them, that even were they unobjectionable on the score of expense, many doubt whether such holiday exhibitions are productive of any real benefit to the army. All the advantages that can flow from them, rating them at the very highest, are dearly purchased with a waste of treasure which would cover Russia with roads in the course of a few years. But it is vain for his ministers to object; the emperor must be amused. And so much the better for England! These shows at home keep him so poor, that he can do little harm to his neighbours. His most faithful counsellors assert that the discipline of the army could be quite as efficiently maintained, at one-third of the expense.

On these, and, in fact, on all occasions, Nicholas treats his army too much like a plaything. The men are drilled, and laced, and strapped, and perked, with such childish minuteness, that they begin to think a soldier can have no higher duty than to look well on parade. "He fiddles away with his guard," said an officer, "just as a child does with its doll; and he is bringing up his son to do the same."

The amount of the Russian army in time of peace, is nominally 612,332, of which the imperial guard contains 41,200. But it would be more near the truth to regard the army as almost double this strength; for it does not appear that the government has ever reduced it to the strict peace establishment.

We cannot profess, however, to give *authentic* information on the subject of the actual amount of the army. We have already referred to the extreme difficulty we often had in arriving at the truth on even the most public questions, but about none did we encounter greater contradictions than on this. One person would tell us that the army is a million strong, another that it reckons only half that amount. In short, the public would appear to know nothing at all on this subject. It is impossible even to ascertain the number of officers, there being neither army-list, nor guide of any kind, published by government; which, for very obvious reasons, keeps all these matters to itself. Even the Marquis of Londonderry, with all the excellent opportunities which he enjoyed for obtaining every kind of information, confesses that he could not ascertain the strength of the Russian army at the present moment. "It is very difficult," such is his confession, "to get at exact in-

formation, as on this head the greatest secrecy prevails."

The most correct enumeration of the Russian army that has yet been given, would appear to be that of Marshal Marmont, in his valuable work on Southern Russia; in which he states that "the *imperial guard* are six divisions, three of infantry, and three of cavalry, making sixteen battalions in all. The grenadier corps has three divisions of infantry, made up of twelve regiments, and a division of light cavalry, made up of four regiments; also two batteries of horse artillery, and fifteen of foot. The regiments of guards consist of three battalions of infantry, and seven squadrons of cavalry. The six corps of the line are composed each of a division of light cavalry (made up of four regiments), three divisions of infantry, each of four regiments—in all twelve regiments; besides two battalions of foot, and two of horse artillery. The total six corps of the line are seventy-two regiments of infantry, and twenty-four of cavalry, twelve batteries of horse, and ninety of foot artillery. The *corps of cavalry reserve* has two divisions, each four regiments, making a total of twenty-four regiments, and twelve batteries of artillery. The reserve of the line are three divisions, composed of twenty-four battalions. There

is, in addition, the corps of the Caucasus, Siberia, and Finland, the troops of the interior, fifty battalions of horse militia, and one hundred and forty-six regiments of Cossacks." *

There is no exaggeration in asserting that, *within* Russia, this mighty army is unconquerable. For a *foreign* war, however—for a long, or even a short service in any other part of Europe—the best judges consider them by no means likely to be formidable. No man denies that they make a good show on parade, and at the annual manœuvres; but even on these occasions, there is nothing very astounding to be discovered in their training or capabilities. In short, their merits, as compared with those of the English army, may be summed up in the words which we have heard attributed to a distinguished British officer (Sir T—— A——), who, after spending several days with the emperor in witnessing the manœuvres of fifty thousand of his finest troops, said to some Englishmen present, "This is all very fine, but we have nothing to learn from them."

We will grant, however, that the emperor's officers acquit themselves on all show occasions *better* than any in the world. None cut such a figure either at an imperial levee or an imperial

* *Marmont*, as quoted in the "Recollections of a Tour in the North of Europe," vol. i., pp. 162, 163.

banquet. They are potent trencher-men, and most gallant courtiers; can waltz as Russians only can waltz, and coin

> ——— "soft words for lady's ear,
> Or compliments for rougher mood,"

such as Russians only can coin. In short, if a soldier's duties never called him beyond the well-roofed exercise-house, or the glittering ball-room, the emperor's army might challenge the world. Some, however, believe that the qualities of troops are better tested in the field than on the carpet; and, following the Russian officer from the gala-room to the bivouac, they discover that men who look well and "act" well in the mimic scene of war, do not always acquit themselves the most ably in the real tragedy. Such cavillers ask—what have the Russians done in Circassia? None looked better in the reviews of St. Petersburg; yet they have been repelled, times without number, by what they termed a mere mountain horde, the very best of whom, assuredly, never were called "brothers" by an emperor, nor allowed to kiss the hand of an empress. In Poland, too, as is well known, they were all but beaten; their choicest troops having been nearly driven from the country by raw insurgents: and in the last campaign against Turkey, as has been admitted by military

men of all nations who have since visited the ground, things were done which would have disgraced a rabble of schoolboys; weeks having been spent on points where days ought to have sufficed. It is *morale* that they want—energy, high soldierly feeling—that which, whatever be its name, can alone make an army valuable.

Whether the spirit and tone of feeling in the Russian army are likely to be improved by the experiment now making, of filling it up with Polish Jews, may be inferred, from what an officer told us in describing these reluctant warriors. "They are so fond of the smell of gunpowder," said he, "that each man needs to be put between two Russians, who pull him into action, and have instructions to shoot him if he runs away." These men, be it remembered, are quite distinct from the real Poles. There are whole villages of them; and it was notorious during the late melancholy war in Poland, that a couple of Russian soldiers had but to appear in a place of some hundred inhabitants, and be allowed to do as they pleased; the people falling on their knees in terror, and granting all they demanded.

The Russians, however, are far from sharing in this Jewish want of courage; yet their courage, even at best, is not of a kind that can be much relied upon. In mere looks, and such advantages

as good drilling can give, few troops surpass them. The imperial guard is one of the finest corps in Europe. The Finland sharpshooters also, who were of such importance at Ostrolenka, are greatly admired. An English gentleman, who has been long in the Russian service, says, they are among the best ever known: with single ball the men can bring down a crow on the wing with the greatest certainty. The same officer states that, various as is the composition of the Russian army, there is not a single portion of it that will not endure any privation of food and rest, without the slightest murmur. Their power of enduring fatigue he considers quite wonderful. The Prussians, their neighbours, he regards as unfit for hard work, because too young. A long war would make the Prussians capital soldiers, none being more *willing ;* but at present they could be worn out merely by marching and countermarching, without a single battle; for the very good reason that, from their years, they cannot bear fatigue like men double their age, and who were under arms before the raw students of Bonn and Breslau had left their cradles. This difference was strongly seen at Kalisch. The exercises each day were necessarily short, for old Frederick William's sake; yet, before the few hours were out, his best Brandenburgers were completely "knocked up," run-

ning away to the bushes, &c., while the Russians thought it a mere holiday, being accustomed even on ordinary occasions to be under arms twice the time. Altogether the Kalisch business was a failure—at least to the Prussians. Their officers —men of limited fortunes and honourably strict economy—were galled by being placed in contact with the profuse living of their northern friends. While nothing but champagne and wassail rang from the Russian dinner-parties, the Prussians were fasting on sour moselle and lean rind-fleisch.

The regular period of service is twenty years; but if war be going on at the close of that period, two years more are required for privates. No pensions are granted, but there are regulations compelling the men to give so much of their pay to certain funds, from which, on being discharged, each man has four or five hundred roubles (16*l* or 20*l*.) to receive, with which he enters on a little farm. Such at least was the statement made to us by an officer of great experience; but we are compelled to add that it was flatly contradicted by another to whom we repeated it, and who insisted that the soldier is dismissed without a farthing. After this, go to Russia for truth!

Each proprietor is compelled to furnish annually five recruits out of every thousand of the popu-

lation on his estates, and pays to government the sum of 33 roubles (1*l.* 5*s.* 10*d.*) for the outfit of every man drafted. The nominal pay—near a rouble a-day—is better than in other continental countries; but after paying his rations, &c., the poor fellow has only a kopeek, or *less than half-a-farthing*, of pocket-money remaining. Small as the pay may seem, he comforts himself on reflecting that it is munificent compared with that of the sailor.

In regard to food, the soldiers are looked upon as being very well off, every man getting 3lbs. of bread daily, as well as a liberal allowance of beef and vegetables. Every time the emperor is present at a review or parade, each man gets a rouble (or rather it is paid to the fund) and a glass of brandy.

The best thing connected with the army, however, is that every serf on entering it becomes free. Yet we saw nothing to make us suppose that it is a popular service with any class, and especially not with the peasants. How different from those of France! So little do the Russians like the idea of becoming soldiers, that all conscripts must be sent to head-quarters *heavily chained*, to keep them from running away. In the remote villages we frequently met small bands of them marching in this state, and for a long time supposed them to

be convicts,—so harshly did the emperor's ardent warriors appear to be treated.

The officers are but wretchedly paid. After many years' service, they have not more than 700 roubles (28*l.*) a-year. Without private fortune it is quite impossible to live in the army. Even generals are paid at a rate which seems incredible. Colonels in command have an allowance for table-money, which in part makes up for the smallness of their pay.

Not satisfied even with the numerous army already at his disposal, the emperor would seem to intend that the whole of his empire shall be converted into one vast encampment; and with this view, by means of his military colonies, he is planting it with soldiers as people plant cabbages. There is great diversity of sentiment about the success of these establishments; but of the schemes which he hopes to accomplish by them and his numerous army, there is but one opinion. The consideration of these schemes, however, will be entered upon with more propriety when we shall have made ourselves better acquainted with the other great arm of the emperor's power—his navy; to which important subject the next chapter will be devoted.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE EMPEROR'S NAVAL PROJECTS, AND THEIR DANGER TO ENGLAND.

What is England doing?—Naval statistics of Russia—The Baltic fleet—That of the Black Sea—Of the Caspian—Steamers—Danger from the numerical strength of her marine—Otherwise no great cause for alarm—The Russian revenues not fit for such continued outlay—Rotten ships—Naval projects condemned by the emperor's ministers—Service not liked—Spirit of the sailors—Their bravery—Docility—Admiral Krusenstern—Officers in spurs—Russian sailors only bad soldiers—Their awkwardness—Ships run ashore—Officers mast-headed—Emperor's severity to them, and consequent unpopularity—Amusements of his young cadets at Peterhof—Childishness and cruelty of the system—Parade of Peter the Great's boat—More care now taken in building ships—*The Russia*—Visit to the COLLEGE FOR NAVAL CADETS—Annual expenses of the whole Russian navy—Necessity for preparations in England—Efficacy of Lord Durham's remonstrances—Engagement with the Swedes—Reflections—England has nothing to fear in the event of a war with the emperor—His weakness—Folly and criminality of the present clamour for war.

WE have stated at a former page—more ingenuously perhaps than wisely—the extreme vexation

which we felt while passing through the Baltic fleet at sea. What right have *they*—was the question which rose petulantly to our lips—what right have the Russians to so many fine ships? "Children of the Desert," who, a hundred years ago, scarcely knew that there was a sea, and had not on their abominable swamps a ferry-boat that their tzar could sit dry in, nor a carpenter to patch it, till he himself gave them a lesson! Let England answer the question—England, which has witnessed the progress of this gigantic force without uttering a word to check it—without making a single preparation for coping with it becomingly in the hour of need!

For—in sober earnestness—what have we to meet this new navy? Ships we can count by hundreds: but are they *disposable*, ready to put to sea on an hour's warning, as these are every summer? When our navy was at its best, we were a match for all the navies of Europe; but now that, by universal admission, it has sunk from its palmy state, are we able to meet not only our old foes—every one of whom longs for the day of our humiliation—but this overwhelming foe in addition? It is not feared that Russian ships are better than ours, nor that the Russians are better sailors. Our ships are, as ever, the best in the world; and of

their officers as of their crews, it can still without exaggeration be said, that

> —— "A braver choice of dauntless spirits
> Did never float upon the swelling tide."

But men, however bold, cannot fight without ships; nor can ships, however stout, steal out to sea of their own accord. The error of England is, that, having many more ships than Russia, she yet allows them to lie idle, as if they were to be improved by rotting a while. It is now admitted on all hands, that, after providing for the large forces which we must keep up in the Mediterranean, in the Tagus, on the coast of Spain, on the American stations, we have not more than half a dozen ships that could be available for any sudden emergency. But what are these—what are even the whole of our twenty heavy ships afloat, against a foe which now, in the Baltic and the Black Sea together, possesses not fewer than forty-five ships of the line, with a numerous complement of frigates and smaller vessels, in round numbers making up the formidable force of one hundred and sixty ships, most completely equipped, and constantly victualled for four months' service?

We will not say that Russia, even had she attempted to take us by surprise, has ever been in a

condition to deprive England of her supremacy on the ocean. On the contrary, our patriotism, or, as some may say, our prejudice, is still so blind, that we are firmly persuaded that England, even with numerical force against her, has ever been, and is at this moment, able to humble any foreign power that may be rash enough to excite her anger. So long as we trust in English valour, and in that higher aid which has ever fought on our side, and will still protect us as a people raised up for advancing the welfare and civilization of the whole human race, we shall never join the cry of those who think that England is now to sink from her high place among the nations. But while we refuse to adopt the exaggerations in which some have indulged on this subject, we cannot conceal the fact, that Russia now possesses a navy which ought to make us look searchingly at the state of our own. The magnitude of the danger which menaces us will be most apparent, from an analysis of the united force above named. The Baltic fleet, for instance, which, two years ago, consisted of only twenty-six ships of the line, now (1838), including the two fine ships which were launched last September, is composed as follows:

1	Three-decker	of 120 guns.
3	Three-deckers	of 110 „
7	Ships	of 84 „
19	Ships	of 74 „

in all, thirty heavy line-of-battle ships (not forty-five, as has been erroneously stated). To these, however, must be added,

1 Razee	. . . . .	of 56 guns
3 Frigates	. . . . .	of 52 „
18 Ditto	. . . . .	of 44 „

besides corvettes and smallcraft; in all composing a fleet of the strength above named, and manned by a force of 33,000 men.*

The Russian fleet in the Black Sea, which, three years ago, reckoned only fifteen ships of the line (not eighteen, as has been frequently stated in England), with smaller vessels in proportion, and manned by 19,800 well-trained seamen, was considerably weakened by losses in the severe gales of the winter of 1837-8; but, in consequence of additions made to it of ships recently launched at Nicolaeff, &c., the strength of this fleet at the present moment amounts to sixteen ships of the line, which, it is said, will be further strengthened in the course of the ensuing summer, by the addition of other ships now building. It

* These numbers will be found to differ considerably from those of the list published by Captain Crawford, many additions having been made to the naval force of Russia since his pamphlet was published. From what we saw of him in the north of Europe, we were fully prepared to find that any thing coming from his pen would be well worthy of the attention with which his pamphlet has been received in England.

being customary in Russia to begin the training of the crew of a new ship the moment her keel is laid, the ships last referred to will be ready for sea as soon as they are launched.

Nor is the list yet finished. In calculating the naval strength of Russia, we must not overlook the ships which she now has on the Caspian, which are the more valuable to her, that there is no chance of an enemy being able to reach them. Already there are several vessels of very considerable size on this sea; and more are in rapid progress at the building-yards recently established at very favourable points.

The last item to be added is her steamboats, which, in such seas as Russia will have to fight upon, will be of the utmost service to her in case of a war. Including those on the Caspian and the Sea of Azoff, she has now at least sixty steamers, of one kind or other.

Great, however, as the naval strength of Russia undeniably is, we must not allow our fears to blind us to the fact that she has often had a fleet much more numerous than her present one. At the commencement of the wars of the French Revolution, she had a fleet half as strong again as that now under consideration; and at the termination of those wars, she had exactly the same number of large ships that she now has. After

that period, indeed, the navy was greatly neglected; and it had dwindled away to nothing when the present emperor came to the throne.

Yet, admitting, as we most readily do, that the Russian navy has at some former periods been strong and numerous; admitting also that the fleet, whose strength is above detailed, is, in every sense of the word, inferior to ours; that much of what has been circulated about the science of the officers and the adroitness of the men is mere puerile exaggeration; that the Russian sailor is a hundred years behind the British;—admitting all this, the great fact must still strike all who reflect on this subject, that the *Russian navy never was before in such high condition as it now is.* Ships and men, even the worst in the service, are far superior to any that she ever before could boast of.

Besides,—the mere *numerical* strength of such a fleet, managed with however little skill, cannot fail to tell tremendously when war breaks out. Though England has nothing to fear from superiority of ships nor of seamanship, she ought to look well at the *physical weight,* the brute force, of the many-limbed leviathan with whom she will have to engage.

We saw nothing in Russia, however, that need make any Englishman seriously afraid of her

power. England, if she be once fairly *aware* of the danger, may smile at the emperor and his thirty mile of ships: but what we saw in Russia certainly impressed us with the conviction that England *must*, and must speedily, do something more than she has yet done in the way of preparation, before she can treat this matter with the indifference which many have shown in discussing it. France has taken warning: from Toulon to Cherbourg, her arsenals, which had long been silent, have been in a state of the greatest activity since the spring of 1837; and would England but follow the example, the sooner Russia comes out of her lurking-places, the better. We are, however, persuaded that, so far from being anxious to go to war with us, the very moment that the English government could say to the Russians,

"Let them be welcome, then; we are PREPARED!"

little would be heard about the emperor's ships: they would not dare to show themselves on the waters, but would be allowed comfortably to rot where so many of them are rotting already,—in the docks of Cronstadt.

Much as we had heard of the emperor's energy, we were still surprised to learn that the fine fleet which we had sailed through, is almost entirely of his own creation. When he came to the throne,

there was not a ship of any value remaining in the Baltic! In fact, he is now labouring as hard on his navy as he long did on his army. He is determined that Russia shall be not only a naval power, which Peter had made her many a day since, but that she shall be a *first-rate naval power*, cost what it may. To aid in accomplishing this project, he makes every personal exertion to inspire the fleet with enthusiasm; showing himself frequently to the sailors; popping upon them by surprise, to see whether all is going right; is now in the dockyards, and next day on the Baltic, threatening, encouraging, promoting; every where giving an example of vigilance and self-denial,—every where enforcing the great doctrine of the Russian creed—*Devotion to the Emperor.*

These, all will admit, are excellent methods for accomplishing his darling scheme; but whether he will be able to increase his fleet to the immense amount contemplated, to us seemed very doubtful, when we were told that his very best ships last only nine years, and many only six! The *wet* rot is disabling them, not quite so fast, perhaps, but quite as efficiently, as English shot would do. Vessels launched in 1823 had to be retimbered in 1830, and at the end of twenty years they are broken up altogether. Worse ships, it is said—we are speaking of quality, not of look—were

never put together. They have all been hurriedly built from unseasoned oak, injudiciously cut in the forests of Livonia. The emperor wanted to *make a show*, to surprise Europe, when, without the world being at all aware of what was going on in his dockyards, he should suddenly be able to announce, through his newspapers in Germany, that the Baltic fleet of Russia was at sea, and consisted, in round numbers, of at least one hundred sail. It was vain for practical men to object that ships are not mushrooms, and cannot be raised in a single night, or that, if so forced, they must, even like mushrooms, decay as fast as they have risen. The emperor *willed* it so; and that was reason sufficient. Who had a better right to have his whim gratified?

We are willing to admit that his navy costs the emperor little. Indeed, it is one of the points which should never be forgotten in considering this question, that Russia can not only *build* ships cheaper than any other European power, but can also man them for less. The pay both of officers and men is so small, that the annual outlay on twenty Russian line-of-battle ships, would not defray the expense of ten of ours.

But, however small both the first cost of his ships, and the maintenance and pay of their crews, may be, his revenues are not fit to meet, for a succession of years, the rapid destruction con-

stantly going on in the navy; the only marvel is, that it should have been possible to keep up this ruinous display so long. "You forget," said a friend at St. Petersburg, to whom we were speaking of the expense of maintaining in an efficient state, a fleet composed of such perishable materials, "you forget that the sands of Siberia are made of gold, and that Russia has no national debt, or so little that she scarcely feels it."

But the sea is a greedy mistress; and the monarch who woos her ought to have few other favourites. Fortunately for England, Nicholas has many other rapacious claimants for his golden sands. A numerous army to support; an expensive and harassing war in the Caucasus, from which he would willingly, yet dare not for shame, recede; the most numerous and not the worst-paid diplomatic corps in Christendom; agents, informers—spies if you will—handsomely pensioned at every court of Europe, and throughout the whole East; these are some of the other favourites maintained by the emperor; all of them rapacious enough to leave little for a service that needs so much to keep it even in any degree of respectability. "I will not stop," such is said to be his boast, "until Russia has a hundred sail of the line in the Baltic;" but all impartial foreigners who have been in Russia, and who have taken the trouble to inquire into these matters, instead of

dreading that he will be able to increase his fleet to this unheard-of extent, greatly doubt whether he can long be able to keep up even the present number of ships.

Nor is it by foreigners alone that this opinion is entertained; by none are the emperor's naval projects more loudly condemned, than by enlightened Russians. In the bosom of the senate itself, among his warmest friends and ablest advisers, his fancies about making Russia more formidable at sea, are most unequivocally opposed. Nothing is more common at St. Petersburg, than to hear that all the ministers condemn the fleet, as a mere wasteful toy.

Even those who found their arguments, or their fears, about the ability of Russia to keep up and to increase such a fleet, on the alleged increase of her revenues, must admit, that if the public income has improved—a fact which cannot be denied—the public expenditure also has *more than doubled* within a few years. To continue his fleet, therefore, the imperial magician must find some other El Dorado besides his Siberian one; he will wave his wand for many a day, before ships can be evoked without more vulgar aid.

Admitting that, from the small amount of the public debt, he must always have a much larger

proportionate share of free revenue than England, yet, in justice to other departments, little more can be spent in the dockyards than is at present done. It is even said that the fleet has already drained the treasury to such a low ebb, that—alas! for all believers in the teeming fertility of his fabled sands!—the emperor would fain try a more common species of alchemy—that of charming money from the Jews of Hamburg and Amsterdam. In plainer terms, it is thought that, raise it where he may, he must soon have recourse to a new loan, and that the attempt would have been made before now, had not the first proposals been unfavourably received among the great capitalists of Europe.

So much for the fears which England needs to entertain, about the projected increase of the Russian navy. As to the ships already built, however, it is but fair to confess that, so far as mere *look* goes, few ships of any nation can surpass them. We not only saw them under sail at sea, when they seemed to do their work most beautifully, but, two days after, we lay alongside the largest of them, off Cronstadt, when they returned to be laid up for the winter; and, in spite of their irregular look,—some being high, somelow on the water, some having round and some square sterns,—presenting specimens, in fact, of all the

different plans suggested within the last thirty years,—on both occasions we were forced to admire their general appearance. But, huge as they seemed, though their lofty sides loomed above our little bark, like those of a mountain, and the men in the shrouds dwindled away to the size of crows, still, considering all the circumstances which came under our observation, we saw little to make us fear for the consequences of a quarrel with Russia. However well ships may look in port, their value in action depends on the men; and in the Russian sailors we discovered nothing that would entitle them to be compared for a moment with ours. Of mere bone and muscle they have abundance; being, in general, stout, well-made fellows: but they want life and activity. They move about, as stiff and prim as recruits obeying the drill-sergeant; and they sit down to the oar with the agility of Dutchmen going to climb a stair. Their gray jackets and whalebone stocks are not the only differences between them and our sailors: instead of the free, care-nought look of the British tar, the Russian has a quiet subdued manner. He is more like the slave chained to the oar of the ancient galley, than the modern sailor with a home to fight for. He looks as if going through a task, not an occupation; as if working because the lash is over him; doing something

from which he would run away the moment he has an opportunity. In fact, the service is far from popular in Russia, and there is little chance of its becoming so, while the common sailors continue to be paid with a pittance so wretchedly small, that a beggar in the street would scarcely take their daily pay for an alms. To sum up all, the people want that which no amount of pay, no severity of discipline, no enthusiasm on the part of their sovereign, well as they love him, can ever make up for; they *want all passion for the sea.* It is not their element.

Let it not be thought, however, that we charge them with want of bravery. The Russians are a bold and gallant people. It is the system, not the men, that we blame, for what struck us as defective in their sailors. They have, undeniably, one virtue over the English,—docility. The Russian is the most obedient creature in the world; he has no will, no wish, but that of his superior. Neither privation nor danger will ever draw a murmur from his lips; it is the command of his officer, and that for him is quite sufficient. Such a thing as insubordination was never heard of among a Russian crew. There is an instance of five of their ships having fled in the very commencement of a battle; but it was the cowardice of the officers, not the insubordination of the men,

that led to this disgraceful exhibition. If those who command them be firm, Russians will stand till their last shot is fired.

We had a remarkable testimony to their submissiveness, from Admiral Krusenstern, at St. Petersburg. When this distinguished officer was preparing for his voyage round the world, he said, the Emperor Alexander authorized him to select the men best suited to his purpose, from all nations, and at any expense; but, wishing that the merit or failure of the enterprise should be exclusively Russian, the admiral took none but his own countrymen; and out of a numerous crew, he found it necessary *to punish only a single individual during the whole two years he was away.* Every thing he proposed—short allowance, change of diet, additional duty—was cheerfully submitted to; a docility which drew his attention more forcibly, from his having often known English sailors—with whom he is well acquainted, in consequence of having served six years in our navy—murmur for much more frivolous reasons. A man who has seen the marines drawn out to quell a mutiny got up in consequence of a diminution of grog, recommended by the doctor during the prevalence of a dangerous disease on some part of the East-India coast, could not but be struck by the readiness with

which his own countrymen endured every necessary restriction. The gallant admiral, however, is far from insinuating that he thinks the British sailor likely to fight worse in the day of battle, because he sometimes shows a will of his own.

The greatest defects in the Russian navy, originate in the emperor's favourite project of making sailors as like soldiers as possible. What would the crew of the *Caledonia* have said, had they seen Admiral Rowley strutting the deck in a gale, with *spurs* on his heels, as long as those of a Cheapside shopman? Yet, such is the Russian fashion; every officer on board is booted and spurred with such fury, that a foreigner is tempted to regard them as so many cavalry ensigns sent to sea for change of air.

From the officers, passing to the men, the first glance at a boat's crew shows that, as already hinted, there is much more of the soldier than of the sailor about them. In their gray jackets, rough duck trousers, and little blue cloth cap with red edgings, they look precisely like army recruits, of six months' standing. Most of them, in fact, are draughted from the infantry regiments, and are not sent to sea until too stiff for their new trade. To make the matter worse, it is only the most awkward of the soldiers that are turned into the navy. It was this which made an English naval

officer tell the emperor not long ago, when he asked him what he thought of his fleet, "That his majesty had done wonders in making it what it is, and would still do more wonders; but there was one wonder, which it would baffle even *his* power and perseverance to accomplish—*out of bad soldiers he would never be able to make good sailors.*"

Even after entering the sea-service, they continue to be drilled in military fashion, during the long eight months which they spend in harbour every year. Little wonder, then, that they should be so unskilful when they do get out to sea for a month or two. The clumsy way in which we saw some things done by the crews of their very finest ships, would not have been tolerated on a Berwick smack. They are so little accustomed to saltwater, that officers and men lose their presence of mind when the slightest difficulty occurs. The breeze, during the few days we were near them, would not have frightened a Margate fishing-boat; yet such is their inexperience, that a very fine ship was run ashore from mismanagement, just as if there had been a hurricane.

We were the less surprised at such an occurrence, when told that many of the men sent with the fleet on the occasion, had never once been at sea before. In fact, the greatest disadvantage

under which the Russian fleet labours, is the shortness of the northern summer. Many of the ships which we saw returning to harbour, had left it only a few days before!

Another incident which occurred during these manœuvres, throws further light on their strange system. How would English officers like to be mast-headed? This punishment is now seldom inflicted in our navy, even on midshipmen; yet, at the very time we were passing through the fleet, two officers of considerable standing, for some very trivial misapprehension of orders, were instantly sent aloft. The emperor having given the command in question less distinctly than usual, the one officer obeyed the signal which the other had taken up wrong; and this was sufficient reason for disgracing gentlemen before the whole ship's company!

Liability to such capricious degradation, cannot foster that high feeling which, in British notions, is inseparable from the very idea of a good officer. In fact, both in the sea and land forces (as will be more fully shown at a future page), the emperor carries his discipline too far. Gentlemen are degraded for the most trifling omission; and it is probably to this practice that he owes the bad feeling which exists against him among officers of every rank. We were not prepared for the

unpopularity now alluded to. We had heard that he was beloved by the lower classes,—by the great mass of the army, as well as of the nation,—and found that he really is so. But we had not been long in Russia before we discovered that, to say the least, there is no liking towards him in the class just named. Nor can it be wondered at; for, generally speaking, none but noblemen are officers, and it cannot be expected, that, if they have the slightest spark of the feeling becoming their station, they can forget insults like those above mentioned. They may not seek to revenge it at the time, but assuredly it rankles in the bosom for some future day; while even those who have never been thus treated, sympathize with their companions, from the mere possibility of being themselves similarly punished, for an equally trivial offence.

On this point, the emperor errs even with his young naval cadets. He is extremely fond of them, making them often come to the palace of Peterhof, and there playing all kinds of follies with them. Sometimes he amuses himself with making them run into the lake to charge old Neptune, or Samson and his lion; promising a reward to those who shall first get on the giant's shoulders—in which position they are forced to remain till they shiver with cold and wet. Sometimes he runs,

wrestles, and leaps with them; and then, with a flock of them round him, allows the urchins to pull him about, leap on his back, and use every familiarity with him, exclaiming to some newly-caught simpleton from France (or England?) beatified at such amiable condescension in one whom he had always heard spoken of as a gloomy tyrant, "See how my children love me!" All of which goes on delightfully, till a luckless little man, in the excess of his mirth, forgetting how dangerous it is to be familiar with autocrats, does something or other that rouses the true lion, and in a moment the complacent speech is changed to "Go to the black-hole, sir!"—or perhaps some more degrading punishment is inflicted.

When we found that the emperor treats officers, and those intended for that rank, so capriciously, it did not surprise us to hear that the common sailor is subjected to a system of discipline which all acquainted with it condemn, as most unnecessarily cruel. The smallest fault is punished with barbarous severity. If Nicholas should urge the example of other navies as an excuse for his method, the plea will not be admissible; for there are nations with whom severity is absolutely necessary, while with the Russian, mildness will go much further than harshness. Some may wonder at the statement, but it is not the less true, that

until made so by the system in their army and navy, the Russians are by no means savage. There never was a people more sensible to kindness. Use them well, and any thing may be made of them.

In short, the emperor's system with his navy is a mixture of severity and childishness, as the facts just stated fully show. Of the childishness, however, another specimen may be given.

The old boat in which the naval propensities of Peter the Great were first hatched, is, it seems, still preserved with great veneration, in the citadel of St. Petersburg. The Russians have not gone quite so far as to build a temple to it, as the ancients would have done, but they have christened it "Grandfather of the fleet," and treat it with honours little short of divine. A day or two before we reached the capital, this crazy concern had been removed with much solemnity from its place of rest; and, by way of worthily celebrating the centenary of Peter, *Father* of the Russian navy, this venerable grandpapa was carried round the whole fleet on a steamboat, which paused at each ship, until officers and men had saluted its precious freight with the same honours as they would have shown to the illustrious Peter himself. This glorious act of the emperor's patriotism, this proof of his reverence for all that con-

cerns the national glory, was loudly sung in the newspapers; nothing but eulogies and exclamations were to be heard for a week together; while the good effect to be produced on the spirit of the navy, by the sight of such a glorious relic, it was beyond the power even of imperial flatterers to calculate. No man of sense, however, could see any good effect the mummery would have, beyond that of making the men laugh at such childish weakness on the part of their master,—who thinks to surprise the world by these *coups-de-théâtre*, but, like other theatrical people, sometimes excites ridicule where he reckoned on applause. Peter himself appears to have begun this folly,—having once honoured the marvellous boat with something of a similar triumph, and given it the imposing title which it still bears.

The emperor has done more for his navy than will be done by this holiday work, by the resolution lately adopted; that, for the future, no green timber shall be employed in the imperial dock-yards. The Russians have paid dear for the lesson, but are henceforth to take time to build, and are to use only seasoned materials. On this principle it is, that they have recently constructed what is undoubtedly one of the finest ships in the world—the *Russia*, of 130 guns, the skeleton of which, at the time of our visit, was to be seen in

the splendid dry-dock, lately built in St. Petersburg, at an expense of 1,600,000 roubles (64,000*l.*). This ship is on Sir W. Symond's plan, and measures 206 feet long, by 57 wide. Formerly she would have been hurried up in a season or two; but, under better advice, four or five years have been employed in finishing her. On expressing our wonder how such a huge ship could be floated out to sea across the bar of the Neva, where they can never calculate on more than eleven feet of water at the very utmost, we were shown contrivances still more huge—*camels*, as they are called, which have long been used with great success, for floating new ships down to Cronstadt, where the carcases are rigged and completed for sea. There can be little advantage, however, in building at St. Petersburg, the expense of these machines being enormous: one thousand men must labour at least ten days, before a ship of great size can be launched with them. Peter had a good reason for building his ships in the heart of the capital, for his city was peopled by hordes who had never heard of a fleet, nor of the sea; and he wished to familiarize them to the sight of ships. This reason exists no longer; the inhabitants of St. Petersburg know very well that there is a navy, the emperor taking good care to remind them frequently of the fact, by a rejoicing for Tchesmé, or

Navarino, the latter of which was commemorated while we were in Russia, by a sham-fight, and grand display of fireworks at Tzarkoie-Celo, when every soldier was compelled to subscribe ten days' pocket-money, for the gunpowder to be used on the glorious occasion!

As to Tchesmé, the Russians forget what it would have been without the young officer from Fifeshire, who planned and executed the scheme for burning the Turkish fleet; and that the English had any thing at all to do with Navarino, has probably long since been forgotten by the Russians, in order to keep their allies, the Prussians, in countenance; who are trying to forget that the British troops had any share in the victory at Waterloo.

Great care is now taken also to remedy another defect, under which the Russian navy has hitherto laboured — the want of good native officers. Instead of employing foreigners, Russians are now trained for the higher branches of the service at the Cadet schools, where every attention is paid to their education. One of the schools is for naval engineers, in which 300 pupils are educated, and the other for officers of the line, containing 600 pupils.

The latter of these is one of the most interesting sights in the capital, and forms one of the

handsomest ornaments of the Quay of the Vassilii-Ostroff. As we are not aware that any account has been given of this institution, we shall mention some facts concerning it, noted down after a very instructive visit which we paid to it, in company with one of the ablest and most experienced officers in the Russian navy. They will show what pains are now taken in Russia with the education of naval officers.

The College of Naval Cadets, then, is the *pet* institution of the emperor, who visits it at all seasons and at all hours. He comes upon the masters unannounced and unexpected. Nothing escapes his eye. He has sometimes dropped upon them at midnight, and gone through the sleeping-rooms, to see that the youths were comfortable. It is conducted by the venerable Krusenstern, than whom the emperor has not a more devoted servant in his dominions; and he seems fully sensible of his merit, honouring him with much of his confidence and regard.

The cadets being absent on their annual cruise at the time of our visit, we had an opportunity of visiting the whole of the building, and have never seen any place of the kind in such high order; which surprised us less, as in Russia *every* public institution is kept with a cleanliness and a care unexampled in other countries. All the rooms

are painted anew every year; the smallest are comfortable, and the public ones even elegant. The emperor's own sons are not better lodged nor cared for than these youths. The young princes sometimes come to play with their future defenders; which they are enabled to do with more freedom, from the circumstance that none are admitted to the college but youths of *noble family*: such are Russian prejudices even in the present day!

The pupils are generally from ten to fifteen years of age; only a few are as old as seventeen. Besides being carefully trained in all the branches more immediately connected with their profession, they are instructed in foreign languages. There are not fewer than seventy teachers, under whom the inmates are arranged in five divisions, according to age. At the end of five years' attendance, students are permitted to enter the navy, as officers of the lowest class. As many as seven or nine, however, of the annual draught,—those who show capacity and feel inclined,—remain three years longer in the college; at the end of which time they may enter the service as lieutenants, while those first sent away must serve five years to obtain that rank. When the three additional years have expired, these, the more talented cadets, have also an option to study three years more (six beyond the general term) at the University of

Dorpat, under the most eminent professors in Russia.

The object of these exceptions is most wise, it being intended thereby to secure to the country the full benefit that may arise from the encouragement of youths of extraordinary promise. No one is *forced* to continue his studies beyond the first period; indeed, every thing here is voluntary, great attention being paid to the genius and disposition of each individual. No one is expected to follow languages or geometry, unless he has a particular turn for them. On mere professional branches, however, there is great strictness; the examinations, especially in mathematics, being very severe and impartial.

Attention being paid to the practical as well as the theoretical departments of nautical knowledge, one of the rooms contains a smart frigate, fully rigged and equipped, of such a size that the youths of ten can climb and reef upon it with perfect ease. Even the mechanical branches of ship-building are not neglected; for in one vast apartment the plans of men-of-war are chalked on the black floor; and in the end of the beautiful dining-room, preparations were being made to build a miniature man-of-war: a hall of goodly dimensions the reader may suppose it to be, when it permits the scaffolding for a ship 50 feet long

and 22 broad, to be raised in it, without appearing to be at all diminished by so large a piece of furniture. The model was first built and rigged in the imperial dockyard, and then sent in separate portions to the college. When finished by one set, it is taken to pieces, and built again by another. The work was to be commenced in November, when the heir-apparent himself, we believe, bore a hand in the work, as well became the prince destined for the post of High-admiral of Russia. At present, the emperor is Admiral of the young Cadets, and during the three or four months which they spend at sea every summer, their ship is frequently ordered to lie off Peterhof, that he may have an opportunity of exercising them in person. But they also make more distant cruises, which occasionally extend as far as Stockholm and Copenhagen.

This institution existed before the time of Nicholas; but he has given it new life. So minute are the pains he takes with it, that he often examines the trial-papers himself, and with great care, in order to settle a disputed point of merit. Those who distinguish themselves he invites to visit his son, four or five at a time, on Saturday or Sunday afternoon. On his visits of inspection, every nook is looked into; larder, kitchen, linen-room,—from the porch to the garret, all must be

seen. When accompanied by his brother, the Grand-duke Michael, or any strangers of distinction, he often commands a boy to strip on the spot, to convince them that the dress and habits of the pupils are not neglected. This, to be sure, is treating *nobles* with little ceremony; something as children do dolls and puppy-dogs: but in Russia, nobles, as well as mooziks, were made for the emperor's amusement.

Hospital, class-rooms, sleeping-rooms, are all kept with exemplary nicety. The Museum contains a most instructive collection of curiosities from the South Sea, plans, nautical and astronomical instruments, models of ships, steamboats, &c. In the library, we were struck by the immense preponderance of English books; and the explanation was, that all the pupils are most carefully instructed in that language.

The whole annual expenditure of Russia, on account of the Baltic fleet, including the maintenance of the institution now spoken of, and those for engineers, pilots, &c., as well as the cost of labour in the dockyards, is said to be 23,000,000 of roubles, or 920,000*l.* sterling. The annual outlay on account of the Black Sea fleet, is estimated at 16,000,000 of roubles, or 640,000*l.*; together making the whole navy-budget of the empire 1,560,000*l.*

We have been thus prolix in stating some particulars regarding the Russian navy, from the immense importance of the subject at the present moment. There is no point to which the attention of our public men ought to be more anxiously directed; for, of all nations, England is most interested in watching the naval progress of Russia; and she is notoriously the only one of which, as a naval power, the emperor stands the least in awe. This was well proved by what happened in 1836. When rumours came out in the spring of that year, that the Baltic fleet was preparing for a much more distant cruise than had been attempted in former summers, the ministers of some of the continental powers, residing at the court of St. Petersburg, ventured to state to the government that it would be necessary to give their sovereigns some explanation of the objects contemplated by such an expedition. But these notices were ineffectual. Preparations at Cronstadt still went on as actively as ever. All this time England had been silent. At last, backed by the sentiments so strongly manifested in Parliament during the warm discussions on Russian affairs, Lord Durham interfered. A hint was given — only a *hint* — that unless the Russian government would distinctly state that, in fitting out such a powerful fleet, they had no object

beyond the usual summer cruise—in fact, that they were not to go *beyond the Baltic*—hammers would also soon be heard in the English dockyards. The hint was sufficient; for Russia is never ashamed to retreat when it is not quite convenient to advance; she cautiously "bides her time." But if she, for the moment, relaxed her preparations, and changed her plans, because the English ambassador spoke out, she will find another opportunity for accomplishing her views, whatever they may be. Not next year, perhaps, nor the one after that, nor, probably, for several years to come; but *some* year not very far hence, when no Lord Durham shall be in the way, Russia will steal gently out; and, when we see so many huge ships sailing down the channel, we shall rub our eyes in wonder, innocently asking, "What has England been doing all the time these were getting ready?"

Such at least was the question which we repeatedly put, on seeing the Russian fleet, not *in print*, where we had often seen it already, but in life and vigour, decked out in all the grim array of battle; and, what should not be forgotten, manned with crews who, though they have not any great love for a sea-life, would yet a thousand times prefer a life of action, whatever it were, to the lazy boywork of Cronstadt harbour, and the tiresome bit of water round it. Without adopting

the emperor's exaggeration, that they are "burning with zeal to show the world that the Russian sailor can fight with the heroism of the Russian soldier," there can be no doubt that they would willingly abandon their inglorious ease. It should also be borne in mind that, however inferior the Russian may be to the British sailor, he is still a tough fellow to deal with when roused. He may want science, but he has brute force enough to make his enemy respect him; and what we say of the individual, may be extended to the mass of their naval force. It is inferior to that of England in many most important respects; but, returning to the point already urged, it is still formidable from its mere bulk, its *physical weight.* For matters must indeed be badly managed, if such a weight of metal as Russia now possesses, should not tell in action. It is true that the ships are at sea only a few months every year, and that, during their long winter, the men forget much of what they had learnt; but Russia was formidable at sea when her ships were manned merely with boors, new torn from the forest and the plough. Can she be less dangerous now that her ships are filled with men who, however far below English and French sailors, are yet more regularly trained than Russians ever were before?

What Russians may do under the most un-

favourable circumstances, was strikingly shown in the engagement between them and the Swedes, in 1788. The empress had been trusting to the usual foreign supplies to man her fleet; but on this occasion, both England and Holland refused to allow their subjects to enlist in her service. The war at last broke out so suddenly, that Admiral Greig had no other resource than to hurry numerous levies of raw peasants on board his ships, and put to sea as fast as possible, with only *one* regular seaman to *seven* who had never heard a shot fired. His fleet, consisting of seventeen sail of the line, soon came in sight of the enemy's squadron, which was commanded by the Duke of Sudermania, and consisted of fifteen line-of-battle ships, all manned with veteran seamen, ranking among the best in Europe. Knowing how the crews of his enemy were composed, the Swedish admiral made sure of an easy victory, and gave battle under very disadvantageous circumstances, in a perfect calm, where superior seamanship could be of no use. In the very commencement of the action, five of the largest of the Russian ships took to flight: yet such was the steadiness of the remaining crews, that the Swedes, after a well-fought battle, were forced to retire before a fleet now inferior in number, leaving their vice-admiral prisoner.

This fact is recalled merely to enforce the great points to which public attention in England ought to be turned—namely, the advantage which *numbers*, however indifferently trained, and *weight of metal*, even when unskilfully used, can give against the most experienced foe. If such things could be done by men who *had to be trained after they came on board*, surely the Russians have not become less formidable now that they have so many thousands regularly bred to the sea. Even were they the worst sailors in the world, which they are not, they are now numerous enough to deprive the proudest foe of all right to despise them. Let England then bestir herself: she has nothing to fear when fairly roused; but "this is no sleepy business;" with such an enemy it is better to be ready than to wait for warning.

The British government must not allow itself to be deceived by the smooth words of the Tzar. He is even now attempting to persuade the world that he has no evil intentions towards us. But these assurances are glaringly at variance with his open acts. Can it be denied, that so long ago as the month of September last, he ordered *ships to be built for him in the dockyards of England itself?* and has he not given instructions that these, and others to be purchased for him in our seaports, *must be ready by the spring?* Surely

such demonstrations warrant, at least, precautionary steps on the part of England. A leading member of the Radical party has been known to say that, were they in office, the first thing they should do would be to take possession of the Sound. But, without going this length, the most pusillanimous must see that England is called upon, if she has any regard for her own security, to keep a fleet of observation at sea, when the Baltic squadron again sails on its pretended annual cruise.

England ought also to look well to the state of her relations with Denmark, and endeavour, by every means, to cultivate a good understanding with a power whose friendship will be of the utmost importance in the event of a war. During a recent visit to Copenhagen, we were sorry to hear from all men of experience, of every shade of opinion, that England has been completely supplanted by Russia at the Danish court.

When the emperor and his advocates allege that it is not against *us* that his immense navy has been created, one may be allowed to ask, Against whom, then, has it been built? Are there pirates to be put down in the Gulf of Bothnia? or have the fishermen of Stralsund all of a sudden become warlike? Where, in sober earnestness, has he a single foe to dread, from the Neva to the Sound?

Or will he say that it is to prepare his naval officers for conquest along the shores of the Baltic, that he is at such pains in teaching all of them to speak English? Nay, it *is* against England, and England alone, that, in the midst of profound peace, and with the words of peace on his lips, he has been preparing for war these ten years past. Fond though he be of show, he is not child enough to have made all this outlay without having some serious end in view; and that end he hopes to accomplish the more securely, because he knows he can reckon on the aid of supporters as eager for our downfall as he can be. No one knows better than Nicholas that we have but one steady ally on the continent—Austria; which, fortunately, if it be our only constant friend, is also the very power whose support will be most valuable in the crisis which may not now be far distant. France, nominally our friend, would be the first to abandon us. The monarch of that powerful nation may be honestly anxious to preserve peace with England, for he is too enlightened not to know the value of her friendship; but he is the only man in his dominions who wishes us well. For in spite of all that has been said about the extinction of national prejudices in France, both the ministry, and, above all, the people of that country, would rejoice to see the day when they can join such an ally as

Russia, in a crusade against the power which they most hate; and hate the more bitterly from knowing that it is the power which they have most reason to fear.

Once more, however, it is not meant to insinuate that England has any cause to dread the result of a quarrel with Russia. We have reason to take warning by the Tzar's manifestations; we ought not to trust one moment to his assurances of continued good-will; but as to any dread that England must succumb in the too probable quarrel, no intelligent man can ever have seriously entertained it. Russia has become powerful, but it is solely by the permission of Great Britain. She has made inch-by-inch conquests; waged war on a petty scale with barbarous neighbours; but let her once rouse the wrath of England, and she will then, for the first time, feel what war is. This overgrown foe would be crushed to atoms in our indignation.

Russia, with all her seeming strength, is but a shadow compared with England. True, her armies are more numerous than ours; but something more than brute force is wanted before battles can be won. Her fleets, too, are strong; but in three short months England can send to sea a force that would sweep them from the ocean. Let Russia lose but one great battle, and how could she replace

her seamen? She has neither merchant crews, nor a hardy race of fishermen, to fall back upon, to repair her losses; and the raw levies of peasants from the interior, above described, would soon be required for service of a different kind. In fact, the numerous population of the Russian empire is a mere bugbear. The population of England, though numerically not much more than a third of that of Russia, virtually possesses three times its strength. The one is compact, and, consequently, available on any sudden emergency; the other is scattered over wastes so wide, that, in case of any unexpected loss, months would elapse before new levies could be raised either for the fleet or for the army. The population of England is also superabundant; that of Russia is so deficient, that the demands of the army, even in times of peace, scarcely leave hands enough to till the ground. Let the emperor withdraw more of the peasantry, and the fields must be thrown out of culture—the country becomes again a desert—the nobles lose their only sources of income—general bankruptcy ensues—and the warlike monarch is left to contend with domestic, in addition to his external foes.

In short, those who dread the power of Russia, do not know what Russia is—a nation of immense, but useless, because unwieldy, power. There is no

life, no healthy circulation, throughout her giant frame. The towns, though many, are not close together, nor united by hourly intercourse, like those of England. They are hundreds of miles apart, and have no common interest to bring them in contact. The inhabitants of the different towns seldom hear of, and never see each other. Having no errand beyond their own gates, the citizens live and die without having been five miles from home. In short, the towns are as distinct from each other as if they belonged to different states. Between the towns and the country there is, if possible, still less sympathy; so that the very circumstance which makes the emperor look so formidable at a distance—namely, the extent of his dominions—will be found, when more closely considered, to be in reality a source of weakness.

As to her steamers, on which Russia places so much reliance, there are twenty ports in England, any one of which could match them without help from government. At the port of Hull alone more steamers may be seen in a single afternoon than could be numbered on all the Russian seas; while Liverpool or Glasgow could meet them ten for one.

But it is not merely her deficiency in ships and men that renders Russia unfit to cope with England: she wants also that which is of more value

to England than all her ships and armies—our MORAL ENERGY; an element of strength which our continental foes too often overlook, in surveying our dismantled ships, and, as they think, defenceless shores.

Away, then, with the thought that England need fear a war with Russia. The clamour about the "favourable east wind" which is to bring her ships in hundreds to our shores—about their being likely to come upon us before we "could be informed of their having passed the Sound"—and about the gratitude which we ought to feel to the emperor for giving us "a six months' respite by locking them up in the ice of Cronstadt," — is unworthy of Englishmen. Russians themselves must wonder when they hear that England is afraid of them; for all Russians know well, that, would we but stand on our guard, the emperor will not send a single ship out of the Baltic, even when the unfriendly summer shall open its gates.

In short, the course required of us is very simple and obvious. Russia has made preparations for war, which, as it was her pleasure, she was fully entitled to do; let England also make preparations,—but on *such a scale as to show that we are in earnest,*—and the dismal clouds and the foreboding thunder which now fill the political horizon will pass harmlessly away. This, at all events,

would be a more dignified and a more Christian line of policy, than at once to declare war against Russia, as some amongst us have too rashly counselled. Surely he who urges his country to war forgets the evils which war must bring; thinks not of the increased burdens of an already burdened people; numbers not the homes made desolate, and the hearts made void—all the terrible bereavements that constitute the costliest part of the ransom by which a nation's trophies are won.

It should also be considered that, as yet, the emperor has not shown any decided intention of going to war. He has taken no step, from which, if our government assume the tone which becomes them, he will not recede without a moment's delay. Little insults, isolated instances of wrong, have been received at his hands; but England can afford to be magnanimous; or, if she must have an atonement, in the name of humanity, let it be something less costly than the peace of the world, —the breaking-up of sociality between nations— the interruption of the progress of civilization, for perhaps long years to come.

very magnificent, but equally nonsensical

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE EMPEROR'S AMBITIOUS POLICY—HIS VIEWS ON GREECE—TURKEY—PERSIA—NORWAY.

Reasons why Nicholas aims at the subjugation of the East—And of Greece in particular—The Greeks in the Turkish empire—Intends to restore Greece to the splendour of classic days—Sketch of the emperor's present territories—And of his energy in governing them—His revenues—Ministry, &c.—Treacherous conduct towards Persia—Has supplanted the English there—Miserable state of that country—Russian cunning—Their deserters in Persia—Schemes against Norway.

It was stated in a former page, that all who have studied the character of the Emperor Nicholas, agree in opinion as to the ends which he proposes to attain with the aid of the immense army and the powerful fleet which have now been described. Those who know him best, unite in asserting, that his ambition aims at nothing short of what may well be termed Universal Conquest.

It is not to Western Europe, however, that the

longing gaze of the autocrat is directed. Her cold climes and grudging fields, are prize too poor for his ambition. It is to the East, the warm and teeming East, that the shivering Muscovite looks. On Greece, with her thousand sunny isles, and on Turkey with her once rich Asiatic dominions, have the eyes of Nicholas, as well as of his predecessors, constantly been set. For, richly as the Byzantine eagles have battened on the plains of the North, they still turn with remembrance to the glowing shores of the Bosphorus, from whence they first winged their adventurous flight. On Greece, and all that ever the wide name of Greece included, the Russian emperors think they have claims, not only from similarity of faith, but also and especially, from early family connexion. Nicholas has allowed the spoil to pass him for a time; but it is only to grasp it with double advantage hereafter—when the Greeks shall have been improved by a regular government, and habits of submission to the law.

But why, it will be asked, should he long thus vehemently for a country so distant and so poor? It is not for Greece by herself that he longs, it is for Greece as the mistress of dominions yet wider and fairer than all she ever owned in her palmiest days. In the stinted kingdom which now bears the proudest of all the names of antiquity, there is a

population of only 800,000 souls; but, scattered over Turkey,—in Europe and Asia,—there are not fewer than four millions of Greeks, every one of whom looks back to Greece as his country and his home. Ask any Greek in the remotest corner of the Turkish empire, who is his king?—and he will say, "Otho, the Bavarian," not "Mahmoud, the Turk." True, he never saw Greece. But he speaks her language. He has heard of her glorious mountains, and, still more, of her glorious annals. He has been hushed in his cradle with songs that tell of Themistocles, and Epaminondas, and Miltiades; and in riper years he has heard whispered, names of more recent fame. Though himself little better than a slave, and degraded by all the vices that long habits of slavery engender, yet his brow will burn, and his eye will flash, if he but hear the name of his country. Give him a leader, and there is nothing that he will not dare, to avenge her wrongs, and drive the Moslem from the throne where the Christian should reign.

It is to this Greek population, then, as well as to that in Greece itself, that Nicholas looks in his schemes upon the South; and it is by them that he hopes to be aided in his projected conquests. It is with a view to retain their affections, that he is so constantly intriguing, not only in Attica and the Morea, but all over the East. When the time

shall come that he can march into Turkey, he counts on their support in every part of the empire. Of what importance would they be, were it only as guides, to an invading army! For instance, taking European Turkey alone, there are at least 40,000 Greeks in its northern provinces, intimately acquainted with every pass and every stronghold by which an invading army would have to march.

To reconcile the Greeks to his ambitious projects, the emperor, through his thousands of spies and agents, tempts them, not only with gold, but with projects of new greatness for the lofty name which they bear. The fallen empire is to be restored, with glory more resplendent than ever. When the Tzar shall have transferred his seat from the gulf of Finland to the Bosphorus, the name of "Russia" shall be for ever merged in the more glorious one of "GREECE." Bright days will then begin to roll. Nicholas wishes to be not merely the Political, but the MORAL REGENERATOR of the East. As Emperor of Greece and Lord of the Orient, the rude Scythian is to drag back literature and science from the regions to which they have strayed, and replant them in the lands where knowledge and civilization first appeared. Attica is to recover her temples, her statues, her academies; Byzantium is to have her

palaces; Ionia, her schools; Chaldea, her astronomers; Egypt, her mysteries. The treasures and the products of distant India are to resume their ancient channels. The mountains are to be clad anew with flocks, and the sea with barks; blessing is to be on every tongue, contentment in every home. The shepherd's pipe shall again be heard in the vales of Arcady, the lover's song once more float from the Lesbian cliffs. Happiness and industry will be every where revived; the whole wide East of Alexander blest with light, with arts, and with LIBERTY.

A noble project! a most gorgeous dream! Who would not be tempted to enlist under the emperor's banner, to share in the glory of bringing about so proud a consummation? It is to be feared, however, that the kind of *liberty* with which he would endow his new conquests, would be very different from that of classic Greece. To show, however, that this scheme is not so completely a dream as some may consider it, and to give some further idea of the character of the monarch who has devised it, we shall now mention a few additional facts more directly illustrative of his policy. From what he has already done, some estimate may be formed of what he may hereafter do.

There is nothing which shows the nature of the policy of Nicholas more strikingly, than the undevi-

ating steadiness with which he has followed up the system of his predecessors. That system, the reader knows well, has ever been one of aggrandizement. It is said that on ascending the throne, the sovereign of Russia takes a solemn oath, not merely to maintain the empire *unimpaired*, but to *extend* its boundaries by every means in his power. That this has been no idle vow, a moment's glance at the map of Europe, or of her sister Asia, will fully prove; it is the book which affords the best commentary on the policy of Russia. How terrific have been her strides! There is something astounding in the constancy of the progress which she has been, and is at this hour making, over the face of the globe. Not very long ago, we find the Tzars of Muscovy confined to the centre of Russia. A little time after, one conquers the kingdoms of Astracan and Siberia, of themselves covering half a continent. Another adds the provinces on the Baltic. A third flies back to the north, and subdues the Crimea. The last Catherine joins Poland and other conquests, in all covering 10,000 square miles of fertile land. Even the mad Paul, short as his reign was, extends the power of Russia in a quarter dearer, though more distant, than all; for it was during his reign that her dominion was first firmly established over Greece, by the formation of the republic of the Seven Islands, under

Russian and Turkish protection — a dominion which, however fondly we may flatter ourselves with the contrary, has not yet been overthrown. Alexander follows, with Georgia, Finland, &c., and last of all comes Nicholas, who has already more than fulfilled his vow, as the conquered provinces of Turkey, at the mouth of the Danube, and the wide acquisitions more recently made on the side of Persia, too strongly testify.

In short, province after province, kingdom after kingdom have been successively added, till the once narrow dominions of the Tzars have swollen to be the largest empire in the world. It includes more than the half of Europe, the whole of northern Asia, and a large tract of the north-western coast of America. Its entire surface occupies more than twice the size of Europe, and constitutes a full eighth part of the habitable globe; while France covers only a two-hundred-and-fortieth part. Not fewer than twenty different languages are spoken within the Tzar's dominions. The total number of inhabitants has been variously estimated, some accounts making it little short of sixty millions, while others make it but fifty-eight. Both of these estimates fall below the truth: for recent returns raise the population of the empire within a little of sixty-two millions. China, which covers a much smaller surface than Russia, contains nearly four

times as many inhabitants. This difference is owing to the singularly unfertile and inhospitable nature of the greater part of Asiatic Russia; for the European dominions are not unfavourably peopled, since they contain at least forty-eight millions of inhabitants, or a fourth part of the whole population of our division of the globe. It gives a singular idea, however, of the barrenness of a large portion of her remaining territory, to find that in Siberia, for instance, there is not more than *one* inhabitant to a couple of square miles. Central Russia is very densely populated, there being in the governments of Moscow and Kalouga nearly 500 inhabitants to the square mile. The average population throughout European Russia is somewhat above 90 to the square mile. The Greek church claims 42,700,000 followers, including Armenians. Of Roman Catholics there are six millions, of which Poland alone claims one-half: while of Jews the number is variously estimated, but according to the most correct accounts, there would appear to be 658,809 in the whole empire, of whom 410,062 belong to Poland.

The annual revenue of the whole empire is stated at 355,000,000 of roubles, or 14,200,000*l.* sterling; of which 75,000,000 are contributed by a poll-tax; 83,000,000 by the guild taxes, and the import and export dues; 116,000,000 by the crown peasants,

brandy distilleries, &c. The national debt, which in other countries swallows up more than half of the revenue, here takes but a very small share of it. Its whole amount does not now reach 50,000,000*l.* sterling. Happy country, which three years' revenue would clear of all its burdens! So prosperous has the state of the revenue been since the present minister, Cancrin, assumed the management of the finances, that there is a prospect of the debt being soon paid up altogether. The sum at present appropriated every year to the fund for its extinction is 30,000,000 of roubles, or 1,200,000*l.* The gold-mines, which many look upon as contributing so largely to the revenues of the empire, in 1836 did not yield more than 130 poods (4580lbs.); while the quantity of platina obtained was only 17½lbs. The quantity of gold obtained in the same year from mines belonging to private individuals was 135 poods, or 4860lbs., and of platina 118 poods, or 4248lbs.

We are quite aware that not only in Russia, but in other parts of Europe, there are many who believe that the amount of gold drawn from the mines is greatly underrated in these official publications, and who maintain that the increasing expenditure of the emperor has been met by the increasing productiveness of this branch of the revenue. In this opinion, however, we can by no means agree.

That the mines have latterly become more valuable is quite true; for improved methods of working have been introduced, and greater attention is now paid to their management every where, but especially to those of the Ural mountains, whose sands are richly impregnated with the pernicious ore. But that any thing like the amount implied in the statements of the credulous can have been realized, is altogether impossible. As gold, like every other article of commerce, must find its way to the market through the hands of the merchants, no extraordinary amount of it can have been realized without the agency of those who would have made no mystery of its value.

The true secret of the emperor's recent prodigality will be found in the miseries of Poland. The sums obtained for the confiscated lands of a whole kingdom cannot be small, allowing even that the conqueror may be liberal in giving them "cheap" to his favourites. The indemnities wrung from humbled Turkey and enslaved Persia have also placed immense sums at his disposal. But the days when he could reckon on these sources of revenue are now, let us hope, for ever at an end.

The general administration of the empire is conducted by eight ministers, whose departments are as follow: *Household,* Prince Volkonsky; *Foreign Affairs,* Count Nesselrode; *War,* Tcher-

nitcheff; *Marine*, Menzikoff; *Home Department*, Bladow; *Justice*, Daschkoff; *Finances*, Cáncrin; *Public Instruction*, Ulvaroff. In addition to these ministers, there are four Boards, headed by directors-general: *Control*, Chitroff; *Post-office*, Prince Lieven; *Church Affairs* and *Foreign Confessions* (has for some time been united to the Foreign-office); and *Land and Water Communication*, Count Toll. There is a special minister, or secretary of state (Count Grabofski) for Poland, and a secretary of state for Finland. All of these, as well as the heir-apparent, and the Grand-duke Michael, have a seat in the senate, which is the highest council of the empire. Its powers have been greatly extended of late years; but, for all essential purposes, the will of the emperor is still the supreme law of Russia.

Nicholas is the more entitled to dictate to his ministers, from the fact that he is *intimately acquainted with the details of every branch of administration* now named. Some kings have a favourite branch, on which they exclusively bestow their attention; but the present Emperor of Russia devotes himself to the business of each in its turn, and is master of every particular connected with it. The ministers all say that the well-known efficacy of the master's eye was never more completely confirmed than by the zeal with which every department is animated.

It is not merely, however, by the perseverance shown in increasing his dominions and revenues to their present unheard-of extent, nor by the untiring vigilance displayed in superintending *every* branch of the administration, that the wisdom of Nicholas is manifested. There is another part of his policy which indicates yet more profound sagacity, and is, therefore, still more worthy of attention even than these—the readiness, namely, which he ever shows to withdraw from any ambitious project, nay, to disavow it altogether, either when it has been prematurely detected by those who may be interested in opposing it, or when it would be otherwise impolitic to persevere in the attempt. This, in fact, is the hereditary policy of Russia. She watches her opportunity—waits till her intended prey has incautiously assumed a defenceless attitude, or till those who should keep guard over it have been disarmed of their suspicion — then pounces upon it with all the cunning and cruelty of the tiger.

This characteristic of the system followed by the Russian government is strongly confirmed by a recent transaction in Persia, regarding which country, and especially regarding the emperor's conduct towards it, we shall now mention some particulars which, while they strongly illustrate the general policy of Russia, are, at the same time,

of especial importance to the English reader; for it will be hereafter seen that the Russians regard the humiliation of Persia merely as a stepping-stone to that of Great Britain.

The transaction more immediately alluded to arose out of the repayment of the expenses of the last Persian war, with which the poor Shah, as the loser, had of course been burdened. All had been regularly paid up to the final instalment, which, at the moment in question, was some time in arrear. The coffers of the state had long been completely exhausted, and the supplies from England were also dried up. Extortion, confiscation, squeezing of rich private individuals and gorged favourites, cutting off noses, thrusting out eyes, and all the other gentle methods of Persian financiers, had already been put in such frequent operation, that they no longer had victims to act upon. In short, the Shah and his ministers were in despair; when, to their great joy and astonishment, help appeared from a quarter whence it had been little expected —from Russia herself. Why all this anxiety about money—a mere trifle of 250,000*l.*? With such a friend as the Shah, the emperor would be the last in the world to exact such rigorous payment. Besides, the matter could be easily settled without one farthing of money. Persia had only to *cede a little strip of territory*, which looks nothing at all

on the map, and every claim for further indemnity should be instantly cancelled.

Will the reader guess what this little insignificant strip of the Persian territory was? It was *only* about the size of one of the kingdoms of Germany —extended *only* from Astara to somewhere beyond Eschref—and would only have put Russia in possession of an important line of coast on the south-western shore of the Caspian, on which she has long had her heart set, from some peculiar advantages which it presents—the present station for steamboats and ships of war being too far distant from that part of the coast where they are most likely to be useful;—and, lastly, it would only have brought Russia within a hundred and forty miles of Teheran, the capital of Persia, from which she has already calculated every mile of the march she will have to make, in order to reach the English territories in India.

Fortunately, this cunning manœuvre was detected in time, by those charged with the care of English interests in Persia; and Russia, never ashamed to go back when she cannot advance with perfect safety, loudly disowned the imputation. *She* had never thought of such a treacherous conquest—would never take such base advantage of Persia's weakness, and of the unsuspecting confidence of a generous ally like England. But, in

spite of all these denials, she *had* thought of it, and—what is more—she will again do so when a fitting occasion arrives. Meantime, as one step towards the accomplishment of her object, and by way of forming as many friends as possible in the envied district, she has been intriguing to get a consul appointed at Resht, which presents a favourable point for her operations.

In fact, the whole of the emperor's conduct towards Persia, ever since his accession, would furnish an admirable illustration of his grasping, yet cunning policy. It was not in one battle, nor in two, that the ill-fated Shah was humbled. The work was carried on gradually—now by an engagement won, and now by a bribe well bestowed, or a diplomatic *ruse* well played off—gradually, but so effectually, that now Persia, besides being stripped of a large portion of territory, lies a helpless, pitiable dependency; without revenue, almost without a government, and literally without an army. Their Scottish commander-in-chief, Sir Henry Bethune Lindsay, whom they look upon as a kind of god—a second Tamerlane—will now have to fight all the battles alone; for in the whole of Persia it would be difficult to assemble more than sixteen thousand soldiers, and of these there are entire regiments which could not muster more than fifty muskets, and not half as many flints,

amongst them. This is even overrating their equipments: the quantity allowed by an intelligent traveller who has lately returned from that country, is "half a musket among a dozen men, and two or three flints to a whole regiment." The fellows fight well; but what reliance can be placed on troops so miserably furnished? The Persian government, in fact, is now a mere skeleton, ready to shrink at the slightest nod of Russia; while the country, never a beautiful one, is fast becoming a desert, from the want of population. You wander over its wastes of sand and wildernesses of salt—alas! how different from the scenes with which young poets deck the land of the fragrant rose and the sparkling fountain—and find nothing but barrenness—misery! Such are the fruits of Russia's policy. She blasts where she cannot seize. The time is not come when she can with safety close her grasp on Persia: England still has some weight where she takes the trouble to exert herself; and, but for England, the kingdom of Cyrus, ere now, had ceased to be named among the nations.

That Russia, however, has not *abandoned* her schemes—that she still looks forward to a day when Persia may be hers—is put beyond doubt by a fact more strongly illustrative of the calculating, jesuitical foresight of the policy we are describing, than any we ever heard of. Some Englishmen, when

lately in Persia, were surprised to see a corps of Russians in the capital, drilled and paraded with great pomp in the most public places. On inquiry, it turned out that these were deserters from the Russian army, tempted by higher pay, and that Nicholas himself does all he can to *encourage desertion*, having made an express stipulation in the last treaty with Persia, that Russians absconding to the service of the Shah shall be treated by him as his own subjects, and allowed to re-enter their native country whenever they may feel inclined, without being liable to punishment or degradation of any kind. The emperor's object in this singular arrangement is, *gradually to remove the prejudices of Persian bigotry against the Franks—to accustom, not merely the army, but the people, to the sight of the Russians*—to prepare them, in short, for the time when Muscovite soldiers will visit Teheran on more permanent duty. By encouraging the deserters to come back after a few years' service, he accomplishes another important object—secures, namely, the aid of men who must be of infinite value in any future invasion of Persia, from having had time to acquire the language, as well as to become acquainted with the manners and geography of the country.

These facts, singular as they may seem, are nothing compared with others equally well-known

to all who have had intercourse with recent travellers in Persia. What strange tales Mr. Ellis could tell about his mission to that country! Vigilant as he was, Nicholas, we fear, was before him in the field, and, if report speaks true, even previous to his arrival, had prejudiced the Persians so strongly against him, that his efforts to save their country from its impending fate were completely paralyzed.

In England we pay too little attention to what the emperor is doing in Persia. All the cry with us is about Turkey. "We must not let the Russians get Turkey!" is constantly rung in our ears; and while we are busy repeating the cry, Nicholas is quietly securing for himself some conquest or other, of much more importance to him than Turkey will ever be to us.*

* The emperor's views on Persia will again be referred to, in connexion with his schemes against British India, in chap. xxxi. Meantime, the attention of the reader is requested to the following extract of a private letter written by a young baronet, who has enjoyed ample and recent opportunities, in the country itself, for becoming acquainted with the state of Persia; and whose name, did the author feel himself at liberty to communicate it, would be a sufficient guarantee for the independence of his sentiments, as well as for his ability to support them.

"*R——t, M——r, December* 3, 1838.

"From the columns of the *Times* newspaper of last month, I learn that—*at length*—Russia has been detected in intrigues with the rulers of the country between Persia and India. These she has been instigating to hostility against India, tempting them with

In the commencement of this chapter we have said that the emperor's ambition does not stoop so

large promises of co-operation and assistance, in the event of the two powers coming to a conflict. To put an end to, and obviate these insidious measures on the part of Russia, the Indian government has taken advantage of the distracted state of the kingdom of Cabool, divided into factions by two brothers, rival competitors for the throne of their father; and has offered its armed assistance to one, on the condition of his becoming a tributary to the British power; which offer, accepted and acted upon, will be the virtual advance of our frontier from the Indus to the confines of Persia, and thus enable us to prevent the machinations of Russia on what will have, in a manner, become our own territory.

"This account, added to my own previous knowledge of the state of these countries, has the appearance of authenticity, and will account for all the rumours of warlike preparations in India.—Affghanistan and the Punjaub will doubtless follow the fate, eventually, of their more northern neighbours of Cabool; but these measures have been rendered imperative on the British rulers of India for their own self-defence, as English influence in Persia is completely eclipsed by the preponderating ascendancy which Russia has obtained in the councils of the Shah, by means not the most scrupulous. Almost all the nobles of Persia are notoriously in the pay of Russia. From the Shah down to the meanest peasant, all are to be purchased, and would always attach themselves to the highest bidder. Russia—liberal in bribes—magnanimous in promises—with threats of advancing her legions continually put forward—has obtained a complete ascendancy amongst them; while the timid, fickle, and unsteady policy of England, has lost for her the high name she once possessed in the East. * * * * * With a barbarian power, brute force is a more convincing argument than logical reasoning. * * * * * To show the nature of the insidious spirit of perseverance, with which Russia has for some time past been endeavouring to gain a footing in Persia, I may mention that the Shah has now in his service a whole regiment of Russian deserters, 600 strong, who have been encouraged to desert by Russia herself. They are his best troops—the only regiment on

low as to consider western Europe worthy of being conquered. Yet there is one exception to this remark. His southern projects certainly occupy most of his thoughts, but there still remain some coveted spots even in the north of Europe—rough but important—to other nations mere deserts, but to him fair as the classic shores of the Ægean. NORWAY — the name will startle the reader as much as it did us, for we never dreamt of the project till we had been in the north—Norway is wanted, to render the naval power of the empire available. With the Black Sea sealed like a fresh-water lake, and the Bosphorus open at her nod, Russia looks forward to the day when she may rule the Mediterranean without a rival. Even at present, she can enter it at pleasure. But not so with the Atlantic—it can be entered by Russia only with the good permission of England. The Sound is a narrow neck to fight through, if it come to blows; and English sailors are so quick-scented

which an European officer could depend—and are considered the fighting regiment of Persia.

"The population of Persia may perhaps be some ten or twelve million; the whole country, from Dan to Beersheba, an arid desert. Her army, disciplined in the European fashion, nominally amounts to 25,000 men; but in reality, she has a standing army of only about 16,000 and never could present, in herself or population, any serious obstacle to the Russian hordes. Her security would consist in the barren state of the country, which would occasion great difficulties in supplying an invading army with food."

when there is likely to be any fighting, that they are sure to be in the way if a hostile fleet should seek to leave the Baltic. The only remedy that the emperor can devise for all this, is to *have ports on the Atlantic itself:*—in other words, to seize Norway, whose jagged coast presents creeks enough for more ships than the Baltic could float. Now that Finland is secured, the way to Norway is open to the Russians any winter's day they please to start on. What opposition can Sweden make in her northern deserts? Besides, if Bernadotte prove recusant, it would not be impossible to find out Colonel Gustavson, who will without scruple give Norway, which never belonged to his family, as the price of a recovered kingdom.

Does this project throw any light on the emperor's assiduity in forming such a fleet on the Baltic?

But it will be said that this is carrying Russian ambition too far; some will look on it as mere madness to speak of such a scheme. But many of the best conquests of Russia were much more improbable than that now hinted at; and those who predicted them were also considered madmen.

Though we give these details, however, we again repeat, that we are not among those who are afraid of the Russians. We by no means fear the Russians *when fairly met.* It is only where the

danger is not seen, or unsuspected—where she is allowed to work secretly, without opposition—that there is aught to be feared from her. Did she avow her intentions, and proceed openly, there would be no danger; but it is not always by ships and soldiers that she works: the fairest of her acquisitions have been made by the pen, not the sword—by gold, not with bullets; and so it will be with the schemes now hastily referred to. Lest the employment of force should alarm us too much, she will try cunning.

It is not enough to say, that neither in the south, nor in the north, will England ever allow such conquests to be made. England never thought that she would allow Poland to be dismembered, nor, more lately, to be ravaged by the fire and the sword. She never thought that we would allow the mouths of the Danube to be seized by Russia. Yet both Poland and the islands of the Black Sea now glitter with the emperor's bayonets.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE EMPEROR'S DIPLOMATIC SYSTEM CONTRASTED WITH THAT OF ENGLAND—HIS PLANS FOR AMALGAMATING THE DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE EMPIRE.

Russian ambassadors selected for their talents—Great confidence reposed in them—High education for the diplomatic service required in Russia, and other parts of the continent—Laxity of our English system—Russian ministers at Constantinople—Boutanieff—Pozzo di Borgo—Maltitz—Matucevitz—D'Oubril—Devotion of his agents to the emperor—Russian spies in the houses of English ambassadors—Large bands of informers in Russian pay all over Europe—The emperor's spies in Paris, and at the German Universities—Their activity in Turkey—Alleged interference against England in Canada—Count Nesselrode—Talleyrand — Metternich — The emperor's care in educating young men from the distant provinces—Makes them his warm friends—Professors from strange lands.

THE important characteristic of the emperor's policy, mentioned towards the close of the last chapter, is another of those points connected with Russia, which have not yet been sufficiently attended to in other countries—namely, the efficient use which he makes of his diplomatic agents.

It is now a fashion with some to look on ambassadors as most unnecessary burdens in these enlightened times—as mere "ceremonies," of no further use than to keep up our dignity, by spending our money and neglecting our interests. But the Emperor Nicholas takes quite a different view of their importance. Thinking that a talented ambassador may sometimes do as much as a strong army, he keeps only the ablest agents in his pay, and, in return, has the satisfaction of seeing them outwit the "good, easy men," who dream that there can be nothing *going on*, because the Russian ambassador gives balls and dinners like the idlest of them. And so he does: the only difference is that, under the noise of fiddles and champagne corks, the smooth Russian conceals the working of the machinery by which he is conducting some snug, advantageous little intrigue, to a triumphant conclusion.

That among our representatives abroad, there are some most able and vigilant men, it would be unjust to deny; but it is impossible for an Englishman to wander long on the continent, without finding reason to regret the incapacity and supineness of too many of our diplomatists. There are important posts where British interests are neglected in the most melancholy manner. It is not the present government alone that are to blame

for this; it is the system, not the men, that is chargeable with the evils complained of. Our interests at foreign courts will never be efficiently attended to, until we are at some pains to educate in a proper manner those who are aspiring to employment in a diplomatic capacity. It is not enough to send young men abroad for two or three, or even half-a-dozen of years, as *attachés*. Every body who has travelled but six months, knows very well how an *attaché* spends his time, and what sort of studies occupy him most. What is wanted is, a careful course of preliminary study for all connected with this service, before they are allowed to cross the channel.

Englishmen may think it strange to be referred to Russia for a lesson in any thing; but there are, nevertheless, things even in Russia which we might do well to imitate; and this is one of them.

Prussia, too, might furnish us with a useful example in the training of young men for this employment. The plan in these countries is to admit none, even to the lowest step connected with the department, who have not gone through the regular course of study prescribed for this important service. Besides the early training at the gymnasia, there are classes expressly set apart for them in all the more important universities.

Languages, history, international law, lectures on the forms and provisions of treaties, constitute part of a diplomatic education. So carefully are the living tongues attended to, that it is no uncommon thing to find students, even *before* they have passed their examination, who, besides being fully masters of their own language, can speak and write with ease French, English, and Italian. Even the more difficult languages are not neglected: in Russia, for instance, the Turkish, Arabic, and other eastern tongues, are indispensable to all looking for employment in this capacity. In Prussia, again, the Russian, which is the most difficult of European languages, is so carefully studied, that we have known an expectant who, without ever having been out of Berlin, was able to translate a pamphlet, which he had written, into that language, so ably, as to receive from St. Petersburg the thanks of the minister at the head of the department to which it related.

How differently is all this managed in England! A young man is sent abroad without any previous training, ignorant of the very A B C of diplomacy. At the end of a few years he has picked up a little French, the commonest language of the continent, which shopmen and milliners' apprentices are now ashamed to be ignorant of. But what

more has he acquired in the course of this residence abroad? Having had no good foundation to build upon, he has never followed out a regular or well-directed system of study. He could not complete what was never begun, and does not yet know so much of his profession as the young Russian who has not left the gymnasium. Even at this stage, however, there would be a remedy against the incapables, were care taken to grant promotion only to those who deserve it by their talent and zeal in the service. But to be convinced that this is not done, we have only to look to the many accomplished men connected with our embassies, who, after toiling for years through all the drudgery of an unpaid *attaché*-ship, are still little beyond that happy position, while they see younger and less deserving competitors promoted over their heads, for no other reason than that they have more influential, or less scrupulous, friends at home.

It will be said, that in a government like ours, such evils are unavoidable; for no minister can rule without bestowing his patronage on those who can support him. But, admitting the truth of this objection, we still revert to the position from which we started, viz., that ministers have it fully in their power to check the evil to a certain extent, simply by establishing a strict course of prelimi-

nary study, expressly for this service, and insisting that, just as in the other professions, none shall be admitted who cannot stand a free examination on the prescribed branches. This ought to be done, were it only for the sake of the young men themselves. While advancing the public interests, by fixing a high standard of previous study, we should be conferring *on them* the greatest possible favour;—for the more numerous the resources they have within themselves, the less liable will they be to fall a prey to the temptations and facilities which so thickly beset them, in the most dangerous career that ever rash youth embarked upon.

But to return to Russia. From the lowest vice-consul to the highest ambassador, all intrusted with her interests abroad are chosen on no other principle than that of talent and fitness for the post assigned. It would be impossible to point out a Russian agent in any part of the world, who is not most intimately familiar with the language of the people he is amongst; and of the immense advantages which such a knowledge gives to an ambassador, it must be unnecessary to say one word. Were an ambassador's duties confined to the courtesies of the drawing-room, or the formalities of a diplomatic note, his attainments in foreign tongues might be safely bounded by the

compliments of a French phrase-book; but the minister who really does his duty, will sometimes step beyond his own family circle. He will mix with the native society, nay, with the people; will learn their manners, their sentiments, their prejudices; and, by the few hours spent now and then in this way, may do his country as much service, as by being ever the first at a review, and the last to leave a ball-room.

The zeal and fidelity with which the emperor's agents have served him, are best shown by the treaties of the last ten years, and by his fast increasing influence, precisely in those very quarters where it was most the interest of other powers to have checked its progress. In all that time, the diplomacy of Russia has not met with a single defeat. It has been a period of uninterrupted triumph to her; of uninterrupted humiliation to every other government of Europe.

That there is little prospect of her interests being neglected in the *next* ten years, might be proved by a survey of the characters and talents of the different ministers who now represent the emperor at the various courts of Europe. With the wily and successful Boutanieff, at Constantinople, who never neglects a single chance of advancing Russian interests; with the talented and literary Maltitz, now at Berlin, and now at London, who can

lay aside his German plays when some real drama is going forward; with the half-English Matucevitz, one week at Naples, and the next at Melton-Mowbray—turning his knowledge of our language and institutions to the more account, that he can so easily assume the appearance of the mere man of fashion, when it suits his purpose to conceal the man of talent;—with the well-tried and watchful D'Oubril, at Frankfort, the city of diplomatists, where deliberations are held that affect the repose of Europe more powerfully than do the decisions of some royal cabinets,*—with the experienced Pozzo di Borgo, sometimes wandering in search of health, but ever at his post when able counsel is required;—with these, and others of less note but equal zeal, watching over her interests, there is no probability that Russia will be less ably served in future than she has hitherto been.

The strongest guarantee which the emperor has for the zeal of his agents, lies in their enthusiastic attachment to his person and system. There is nothing more remarkable connected with those employed by him, than that, from whatever coun-

* Our new minister to the Germanic Confederation—the son of the Speaker of the House of Commons—though young, has the advantage of having been bred in a good school, where he had every opportunity of obtaining such a knowledge of the difficult and intricate bearings of German politics, as is likely to render him highly useful in his new post.

try they may originally have come, they always show themselves most thoroughly *Russian.* The tact of Nicholas in selecting the men fittest for his purpose, is equalled only by the wonderful quality which he has of inspiring them with *devotion to himself.* Those who serve him at home may not be so warmly attached to him; on them falls all the trouble arising from his activity and vigilance. But his foreign agents are too far off to feel the lash. They hear the shouts, and catch something of the reflected splendour of his triumphs, without being soiled by the dust that is raised. In short, they see only the bright side of their master's character, and are not in the way to be fretted by his discipline. Instead of the sharp rebukes which he deals unsparingly out to those near him, *they* are receiving only compliments and encouragement. Hence it is that we never yet saw a Russian agent in any part of the world, who did not live, as it were, exclusively for the emperor. He may be fond of gaiety, of this or that pursuit, but it is ever secondary to a higher passion—a desire to please his imperial protector, by the most unwearied attention in promoting Russian interests. He lives but for this, and often is not over scrupulous about the means he employs in the cause. There are Russian ambassadors at some courts—perhaps all of them do the same—

who employ spies in the house of the English minister—who can neither receive a friend, nor give a dinner, without the certainty that some of his servants will report every word that has passed on the occasion. *Per fas aut nefas* should be the motto of Russian diplomatists. With them the end justifies the means. If they can serve the emperor by it, they see no harm in breaking through the decencies of life.

Nor is it always to needy lackeys that these gentlemen trust for information. Persons who, from their profession and standing in society, ought to be above such treachery, are often dragged into this base traffic. No Englishman would stoop so low; but there are *foreigners in English pay*, who carry tales from the table they dine at.

In addition to such auxiliaries, the emperor has his regular bands of well-salaried scouts, men and women, Russian and native, in every capital of Europe, whose duty it is to ascertain the sentiments of the leading men towards Russia, and keep the ambassador on the spot, or the political police at St. Petersburg, acquainted with all that may concern the views or wishes of the emperor. It was said the other day by one residing in Paris, and from his position well qualified to know what is passing, "We have five hundred well-dressed men and women here, moving in the best society, who, if it

were allowable to give things their plain names, would be described as nothing else than Russian spies."

As might be expected from its vicinity to Poland, no country is more carefully watched than Germany. The emperor's vigilance is not satisfied with placing sentinels at the principal cities merely, such as Dresden and Munich; for it is well known that he also maintains a spy at each of the German universities. The state of opinion among the students, from Königsberg to Freiburg in the Brisgau, and from Kiel to Vienna, is as well known to the secret police of St. Petersburg as to the criminal judges of the universities themselves. But Russia may now dispense with this branch of her espionnage; for the students of Germany, once such hot-headed revolutionists, are now, happily, most completely cured of all their political enthusiasm.

If Russia be thus vigilant in the West and in the centre of Europe, we need not be surprised to find her even more so in those quarters where, as we have seen, she has a still greater interest at stake. It is chiefly in the East that she puts forth all her means of seduction and *espionnage*. The whole of the regions included under that general term, are now struggling in the net which she has silently spread over them. Disdaining no aid, however low, pro-

vided it can be useful, she descends so far as to employ hotel-keepers, and those most in the way of seeing strangers, for the sake of watching all that go or come. Hence it is no uncommon thing in Greece and Turkey to be told, "Take care what you say before your landlord—he is a Russian." Besides this stationary troop, she has a moveable corps of agents, who are constantly traversing all parts of Turkey and the adjacent regions. No traveller can move any distance without meeting some of these. It is not pretended that they are engaged in any actual plot, in organizing an immediate rebellion; they are merely looking out for what may happen, collecting information, taking notes for the people at head-quarters. The plan which Russia follows in regard to most of these wandering agents, is to attach any person likely to be useful, to some of the embassies in the south—at Constantinople, or Athens, for instance—from which, after being well instructed in his duties, he is sent out with a kind of roving commission, sometimes for an indefinite period. We lately met one of these agents, a man of great talent and plausibility, who, having presented a memoir to the emperor on the subject of Syria, and the advantages which Russia may derive from a *closer* connexion with it, was forthwith set off to travel through that country,

and the less frequented portions of Southern Persia. To conceal their purpose better, these gentlemen always appear to be travelling as private individuals, and at their own expense; but on a little acquaintance with them, it will generally be found that their drafts are payable at the chancery of the nearest Russian legation.

Should any think that we are pushing the emperor's vigilance too far, and giving him by his agents an almost ubiquitous influence, we would remind the reader, that many carry his interference still further. Who is it that incites the Arabs in the neighbourhood of Constantina against the French? The Parisian journalists answer, "The Emperor Nicholas." What has stirred up the disturbances in Canada? "Russian gold," say the American newspapers—which further state, that there are agents of the emperor busily at work, even in the United States, rallying the malcontents against England! After these specimens of what is believed by some, about the extent of Russian interference, who shall accuse us of exaggeration in saying, that it is so actively exerted in countries where the emperor makes no secret of his intrigues?

In considering the diplomacy of Russia, it must not be forgotten, that while much of its efficacy is attributable to the tact and vigilance of the emperor himself, great merit is also due to his

minister for foreign affairs, Count Nesselrode, next to Metternich, the ablest statesman in Europe. In talent, honesty, and greatness of mind, he is infinitely superior to the over-rated Talleyrand. Almost every cause that Talleyrand supported throughout a long and tortuous career, was at last unsuccessful. His touch brought misfortune; for of the dozens of governments to which he swore allegiance, and lent his counsel, each succeeding one proved as insecure as its predecessor. The *only* government which Nesselrode has supported, is at this moment stronger and more flourishing than ever. When we have such a minister to deal with, it need not be stated, that there is no court in Europe where England would require to have an able representative so much as here. Our ambassador at St. Petersburg ought to be a man of long experience in diplomacy—of great firmness, yet of much courtesy of manner—of unimpeachable integrity, and possessed of a high sense of honour—intimately versed in all the complicated interests of his country, both political and commercial—and, above all, inaccessible to flattery. A man without talent would be led by Count Nesselrode into every snare; and a vain man would become the emperor's tool in a single week: for there is nothing that Nicholas excels in more than in detecting the weak side of those

with whom he is brought in contact; and there is no one who can employ the discovery more effectually in advancing his own pur poses.

Next to the efficacy of his diplomacy, there is nothing which shows the talent of Nicholas more remarkably than the means he employs to consolidate and keep together the heterogeneous tribes of his vast empire. It would take volumes to describe the system by which the accomplished Pole and the rude fisherman of Kamtschatka—Turk, Tartar, and Fin—Cossack and Georgian—Bashkir and Kirghisian—are all kept in the same order and subjection, as if they spoke but one tongue, and had but one code of manners. One of the methods employed is all that can here be mentioned; but it is a most efficient one—that of bringing the young and talented from the remotest provinces, to be educated either in the capital, or at Moscow. It is thus no uncommon thing to find a youth from the foot of Mount Ararat seated on the same form with one from the shores of the White Sea. It is the emperor's particular study to make himself known to the scholars from remote provinces. There are some schools expressly for such, and these he visits frequently, speaks kindly to the boys, bestows on them some mark of his favour,—in short, *wins* them, makes them *his*, and

then sends them back to their native districts in some official capacity. The youths are, of course, devoted to him for life, and do all they can to inspire their countrymen with the same enthusiasm and love for the emperor, which they themselves feel. Carrying with them the habits and improvements of the more refined society in which they have been brought up, they also aid in spreading, gradually, and without violence, an uniform system of manners throughout the whole empire. Those, however, who show more than ordinary talent, or aptitude for some particular service, are retained in the capital and promoted to offices, in which many of them run a brilliant and useful career. In this way, the stranger in Russia is often meeting people with the dress and manners of the most finished gentlemen, who afterwards startle him by the announcement that they come originally from some distant spot, which he had hitherto regarded as the haunt of none but the Samoeid or the Kalmuck. It needs some time before we can look without wonder on professors from the mouths of the Don, and imperial tutors from the shores of the Caspian, speaking French and English as if born in our far West. One of the gentlemen who accompanied the Grand-duke Michael in his tour through England, is a native of Astracan.

This system of amalgamation has also been at-

tempted on a more extensive scale, viz. by colonising one part of the empire with settlers from another. The natives, for instance, of some of the recent conquests in Asia, have been encouraged to remove to some parts of southern Russia, bordering on the Crimea; but the policy of this experiment is much questioned by those who know the habits of the people.

CHAPTER XXX.

REVOLUTIONARY SPIRIT IN RUSSIA; DISCONTENT OF THE ARMY, AND LIBERAL OPINIONS OF THE NOBLES; POLAND; WAR IN THE CAUCASUS.

Elements of discord in the empire itself—Causes of dissatisfaction felt by the nobles—Discontent among the officers of the army—The emperor's harsh and arbitrary conduct towards them—Insults them—Partiality to foreigners—Persecution of liberalism—Secret political associations among the nobility, especially in Moscow—Prosecutions—Restrictions on travelling—Spread of free opinions—Rumours of plots—Of a revolution—Its probable object—Republics to be established—State of Poland—Misrepresented by Russian writers—War in the Caucasus.

ADMITTING, as we fully do, that there is much wisdom and energy displayed in the system employed for keeping all the parts of this vast empire together, yet we do not see any reason for believing that they are likely to remain united so long as many writers have imagined. However well-cemented the union appears, the elements of disruption are even now at work. The present emperor himself may live to see the Tartar huntsman returning to his steed, and the Persian shepherd

to his flock. Nay, in Russia Proper, in the very heart of his hereditary dominions, there is a little worm at work which may undermine his throne. The discontent of HIS NOBLES is what we allude to. The same spirit which has unseated other Tzars—and, alas, how rudely!—now menaces him.

The causes of his unpopularity with this powerful class are various. Some have private and deep causes of dislike—some have been annoyed by his insulting and tyrannical conduct towards them as public functionaries—some complain of a denial of justice — some of an arbitrary interference with their family rights—some have fathers and kindred pining in Siberia to avenge—and all have, as they believe, cause of complaint against Nicholas, in his attempts to enfranchise the serfs—to raise the lower classes at the expense of their masters. This last cause of dissatisfaction every Englishman will of course consider honourable to the emperor; but it is one which, in Russia, operates against him perhaps more powerfully than any other: for the Russian noble, as has been already stated, looks on his serfs as we would on beasts of burden; they belong to him as much as the stones and trees of his estate; and every attempt to rob him of them, or to render them less valuable, is attacking him, not only in his most deeply-rooted prejudices, but in his dearest interests. Thus it is that those

very measures—his efforts, namely, in behalf of the great mass of the people—which *we* would consider the most likely to strengthen the emperor's throne, are precisely those which most threaten its security.

Nowhere is the spirit of dissatisfaction more violently at work than in that very body which has usually been looked upon as the emperor's surest stronghold—the army. Of the spirit of the common soldiers we heard nothing unfavourable; but, admitting them to be quite free from infection, their allegiance cannot be much relied on when the officers are almost universally disaffected. As alluded to above, in speaking of the navy, this discontent may be traced to the captious and tyrannical nature of the discipline to which they are subject. Officers—not merely young men, but old and experienced veterans also—are punished in the most arbitrary manner. Things, which in other countries would not be noticed at all, are here visited with indiscriminating vengeance. The merest trifle—a boot-strap too narrow, or a collar awry—is censured with all the severity of a grave neglect of duty. For a word, a look, a nothing, an officer may be degraded to the ranks in an instant, without trial or right of appeal. When any manœuvre is wrong performed, all the blame falls on

those in command: insulting words are used by the emperor himself, in the hearing of the privates; and some say that even *blows* have been inflicted on gray-haired men fit to be his masters in their art. Is it enough to a man of high feeling, that an apology is afterwards made, for insults that are only more degrading when inflicted by one who cannot be called to account for them?

Degradation to the ranks is a very frequent punishment; but, though frequent, we never heard it spoken of but with a bitterness which showed that even banishment to Siberia is looked on as less disgraceful.

Banishment to the army of the Caucasus appears to be another punishment resorted to. From the harassing nature of the warfare, and the dangers of the climate, it is always looked upon as equivalent to sentence of death. Exile to Siberia, which, though not so fatal to life, is more degrading than the Caucasus, awaits only those officers who have been guilty of grave offences.

For what trifling causes punishment may be inflicted, is shown by an anecdote much talked of during our stay at St. Petersburg. A young officer, of amiable manners, believed that he had gained the esteem and favour of the Grand-duke Michael. His august protector carried his con-

descension so far, that he had even deigned to visit him occasionally at his apartments. But the favour of princes is fatal and fleeting. He one day entered the apartment of his humble friend unannounced — the youth was in undress—contrary to regimental rules, he was *without his sash.* The moment the door opened he knew what would befal him. "I am lost!" was his exclamation; and the foreboding was but too true—he was instantly ordered to the Caucasus!

The partiality shown to foreigners is another cause of discontent with the higher classes. Russia, they say, has been long enough under foreign tutelage, and can now take care of herself, without having strangers thrust into all the most important and lucrative posts of the public service. Against the Germans, in particular, the outcry is very loud.

The nobles are also galled by the severity with which *liberalism* is persecuted. In Russia, every thing is permitted to a nobleman—*except to have opinions.* If he has so wide a license in other respects, every precaution is employed to prevent him from falling into this offence. When the slightest suspicion is entertained against an individual, his words, his visits, his associates, are all most strictly watched. In fact, society is so extensively infested with spies, that even in his most

private hours a man is not safe to speak his mind.

This system of repressing all political heresy, so rigorously enforced against private individuals, is of course doubly severe in the army. Nothing is so dangerous for an officer as to speak, nay, *to think*, on politics. Even *in his sleep* a man would need to be guarded; for there are instances of words spoken in dreams having been turned against the unconscious self-accuser.

That secret associations exist among the nobles, both in Moscow and in other parts of the empire, is a fact which does not rest merely on the vague testimony of passing travellers; it is confirmed by the public, though not always *published*, acts of the government itself. As strangers, we, of course, had no opportunity of knowing the truth of all that is whispered on this subject; but no foreigner can be long in Russia without hearing the ominous words, "*the emperor trembles before the nobles of Moscow!*" We were repeatedly assured, on what we consider undoubted authority, that many individuals of the highest rank had lately been punished for having joined these societies. Few sentences of this kind find their way to the newspapers; but one of the most recent prosecutions affected so many individuals, that it has reached all the journals of Europe;—it is that of

the twelve noblemen of Moscow, who were arrested in 1837, and have since been banished to Siberia, under circumstances of unusual cruelty.

The emperor was long and faithfully represented at Moscow by Prince Galitzin, one of the most enlightened and patriotic of the old nobility. There can be little doubt that, but for the influence of this distinguished nobleman, political discontent would long ere now have risen much higher in that part of the kingdom. Under a despotism, however, it is a dangerous thing to merit the high character now given of the prince: since we left Russia, he has incurred the emperor's displeasure, for not having been sufficiently zealous in denouncing these political associations. He is no longer governor of Moscow. But will his disgrace arrest the tide of liberal opinions? It will be but the signal for increased activity and increased caution, throughout all the wide ramifications of the secret societies, which, in defiance of the exertions made to put them down, exist in every part of the empire.

Yes, all these persecutions of opinion are vain. The day is gone by, even in Russia, when liberal sentiments can be kept down by proscription and banishment. No body of men on the continent have travelled so much as the Russian nobility of the higher class; and it is impossible that men

so intelligent as many of them are, could live long in free countries without imbibing free opinions; which, in place of being checked, are only more widely diffused by the severe measures employed to repress them. With nations, as with individuals, that which is most strictly forbidden, is often what we most eagerly indulge in. Were the government less severe in proscribing every thing like liberalism, and all that can be interpreted to border upon it, the taste for it might soon diminish; but, as a natural consequence of the zeal and violence displayed against free opinions, it is now "the fashion" to be a liberal.

Not satisfied with punishing liberalism when detected, the emperor has at last struck at what is considered the root of the evil, by prohibiting his subjects from travelling so much as formerly. It is now difficult for a man of any rank to obtain permission to leave the country at all; and those who do so, are on no account allowed to visit France, where the most dangerous lessons in politics are supposed to be given. England is not yet erased from the Russian's travelling map, but it may soon be. Private individuals are not suffered to stay abroad more than five years, under any pretext; those who do not return within that period, are punished with confiscation of estates and property of every kind.

From these restrictions, of course, all are exempted who travel as spies and purveyors of intelligence; yet even these are under the strictest restraints when away. No Russian, while in a foreign country, can consider himself free: the terror with which he regards his ambassador, at whatever place he may for the time be, is only short of that with which he regards the emperor at home. Trembling before the spies of the one, as much as before the police of the other, he must report himself, present himself, and conduct himself, with a deference which amuses the English traveller, happily exempt from all such annoyance.

To these causes of discontent many others might be added; but enough has been said to enable the reader to understand the grievances which have given rise to those

> "——— tales of peril, from dark plots and snares—
> From foes and discontented troops and nations—
> I know not what—a labyrinth of things—
> A maze of mutter'd threats and mysteries."

The question then comes to this: Will the support of the lower classes—for the same impartiality which bids us state that he is disliked by the nobles, compels us to add, that he is enthusiastically beloved by the great body of his subjects—will this support of the humble counterbalance

the enmity of the powerful? In a fair fight, or under a constitutional government, it undoubtedly would; but in Russia, unhappily, there are other means for getting rid of an obnoxious sovereign, besides those of open contest in the field or in the senate.

The existence of this feeling against the emperor is now matter of notoriety. The nomination of commissioners, in the course of the autumn of 1837, to inquire into charges of conspiracy affecting many individuals of rank in various parts of the empire, is a *public* confirmation of that with which all acquainted with Russia, must have been familiar from *private* sources long ago. The foreign journals assert, that hundreds of the accused have been banished to Siberia, by these commissions, within the last few months. In making the above statements, therefore, we do not profess to have been revealing any thing new, but have merely repeated facts, which, though not generally known throughout Europe, are amply attested by the public measures of the Russian government itself.

In connexion with this subject, however, it ought to be stated, that the emperor has it completely in his own power to convert any bad feelings which may exist against him into those of warm attachment. His nobles are men of high spirit,

and, in many respects, of enlightened views; the emperor himself is of a frank and noble character. Let him no longer yield to the counsels of an unfeeling policy; but, following the more generous impulse of his own heart, let him throw himself confidingly on the better feelings of the aristocracy. Let him grant them, under due restraint, the privileges for which they long—let him deprive them of all excuse for continuing to oppress their serfs, by abandoning his own rights over themselves—let him, finally, modify the system of discipline now in force against his officers, and from that moment his throne will be based on a rock, which the united strength of Europe shall not be able to shake. If he wishes his name to live in history, as it is said he does, what more certain prospect to fame can he find, than that which he would command, by becoming the benefactor of the higher, as he already is of the lower, classes of his subjects —in one word, by securing for himself that most rare, almost unheard-of, distinction among kings and rulers, of being a VOLUNTARY REFORMER?

Among the probable *objects* of a revolution in Russia, we were surprised to find that the establishing of republics is supposed to be the general aim. The conspiracy detected in 1825 (the discovery of which, it is well known, clouded with sorrow the dying hours of the benevolent Alex-

ander), contemplated the breaking up of the empire into separate kingdoms; but the scheme most generally in favour at present, would seem to be that now mentioned. If the word *republic* sound strange in connexion with Russia, it should be remembered that, at least in some parts of what is now called Russia, republics have already existed. The time is long gone by; but the traditions of liberty, or even of its semblance, do not altogether die, even under centuries of despotism. That the nobles—among whom alone such remembrances are to be found—have no intention of giving power to the people by these institutions, will surprise no one, after what has been said above. They would make a revolution entirely for their own benefit: they do not wish to free the people, but to enslave them more completely. Surely, then, they have chosen a wrong name, in styling their contemplated governments "Republics!"

In addition to all these sources of domestic alarm, another remains to be named—POLAND. This country is far from being so hopelessly humbled, as to entitle the emperor to dismiss all fear regarding it. Confiscation—Siberia—death—are the gentle words by which he is governing it. He is fast making it a desert, but is not thereby making it more securely his own. The very severity of the measures employed against

them, as might be expected, are driving the people more irresistibly to plot for their freedom. It makes one weep to hear what is hourly done in that fair land. We have heard its woes recited by *a woman*, and the appeal was irresistible. Only by stealth, and in whispers, could she name the land of her birth—but when she found that Poland was not yet without friends—that even strangers had a kind word to raise in her defence—she was overcome with joy. The tale she had to tell was a thrilling one—*nobles* driven through the streets with the scourge—*women* dragged to infamy—children (!) punished for conspiracy! these are a few of the sights of horror daily witnessed in Poland. Yet they tell us that the emperor's speech at Warsaw was but a hasty ebullition—mere words—threats which he never intended to execute. Why, not many months had passed till they were more than executed;—as if it had been intended that their fulfilment should be a mockery of those constant declarations of his agents, who are employed to tell the world so frequently, that Poland, under his benignant rule, is tranquil, happy, flourishing. Yes, *flourishing* it is, in the Russian sense of the term; for barracks and fortifications and prisons are springing up on every side. The large properties are fast passing into more faithful hands. Could the ill-fated Poles in France and England

but see the St. Petersburg newspapers, they would have full proof that Poland is flourishing; for almost every week they contain long lists of the Russian favourites, on whom the emperor is bestowing their castles and broad lands. The work of spoliation is going steadily forward; ere long, there will be little left to bestow; but that with all this, however "flourishing" his flatterers may call it, the emperor himself does not consider Poland very "secure," his large armies and violent measures very clearly testify.

Nor can the struggle for liberty, still going on in the Caucasus, be omitted in this enumeration of the circumstances which weaken the emperor's hands. The war in that singular region, long considered a mere passing revolt, has now assumed an aspect which could never have been anticipated. Will none of the European powers strike a blow, nor even lift a voice, in behalf of these brave mountaineers, who, after years of unremitting warfare, are still able to bear up against all the might of the largest empire in the world? A contest which better merits the sympathy of every generous breast, has not arisen in modern times. Never, perhaps, has the world had a more remarkable example of the efforts that men will make for liberty. Some, well qualified to judge, maintain that the emperor will never be able to subdue

them; and in support of this assertion, they appeal to the irresistible fact, that now, at the close of 1838, the power of Russia is not more firmly established among the Circassians than it was at the close of 1836, when Captain Spencer visited their country, and made his spirit-stirring appeal in their behalf to the English nation. It is even asserted that the Muscovite cause is becoming more and more desperate every day; for now the Circassians, in place of merely acting on the defensive, are about to sally from their mountains, in order to invade the adjoining provinces of Russia; while, it is also stated, the emperor, in addition to his mountain-foes, has to contend against a still more ominous opposition; namely, insubordination in his own army, whose patience has at length given way under the prolonged miseries of this most fatiguing and inglorious war.

Another strong ground of hope for the Circassians may be discovered in the favourable sentiments with which their struggle is regarded by the surrounding tribes, all of whom consider the cause so good, that nothing but force has kept them from joining it. So strong is this sympathy, that, as is not unknown to many in England, the chiefs of Georgia and Mingrelia, at one time, actually subscribed a "round-robin," pledging themselves to rise against Russia. The document was sent to

the Shah Abbas Mirza, who was expected to aid the attempt; but (will it be credited?) Persia is so completely under Russian control, that its monarch had no alternative but to transmit the paper to St. Petersburg. The consequences to those who had signed it may easily be inferred.

We have heard from a gentleman, filling an important situation under the English government, who visited the country not long ago, that nothing can be more favourable for defence than the positions now taken up by the gallant warriors. A land of mountains, some of which are 13,000 feet, and few under 8000 feet high, affords so many capabilities for defence, that he considers it next to impossible to subdue them. Nothing, he says, can be more picturesque than the aspect of this region, as beheld from the sea. The eye commands nothing but mountains of the wildest forms, separated by savage ravines, which are filled with most luxuriant and beautiful vegetation. Strange to say, the only *plains* of this region are on the *summits* of the mountains; while the valleys, which in other mountainous countries are usually the paths to the higher spots, are here all but impassable. The winter is exceedingly severe, and continues long; but no sooner have the snows disappeared than vegetation bursts at once into summer splendour. The climate is not so bad as

the mortality in the emperor's army would lead us to suppose; for the numerous deaths among the Russians are attributable to the position of their forts and encampments, which they have never been able to place any where except on the low and swampy levels, that extend in some places between the mountains and the sea. The excellent authority referred to was nearly in the heart of the principal scene of war, and states that no Russian vessel can come near the shore without being fired upon; for the very sufficient reason that almost every landing-place is commanded by a height, from which it has not been possible to dislodge the enemy. The war he considers as nothing but a ruinous hobby of the emperor; it can lead to no result but waste of life and treasure. The people hate the Russians so inveterately, that nothing but the humane tenure of complete extermination can render Circassia a sure possession of the emperor.

To this enumeration of the causes which render the emperor's position, a less enviable one than it is generally supposed to be, much might still be added. More discontented nations—more ill-secured, because unjustly acquired, conquests might be named.

Is Finland safe? Its inhabitants are Swedes—in descent, in manners, in affections—and wait but

the signal to rid themselves of a hated yoke. Is Livonia secure? Its people still have a warm leaning to their German fatherland. Can Ingria be relied upon?—can Courland?

But we shall stop. Enough has been said to show that Russia, so far from being the strongly cemented and well-harmonized mass, which it is generally supposed to be, is in fact, the most fragile and ill-assorted empire in the world. Nicholas is throned on a volcano.

It is not alleged, however, that the considerations now enumerated are sufficient to entitle us to prophesy that the emperor will, under no circumstances whatever, be tempted to try the fortune of war. But that they have great weight in keeping him from disturbing the peace of Europe too rashly, is well known; and, at all events, they ought to be kept in mind as circumstances which, if a war should really break out, tend to render the emperor less formidable, and to make it probable that, so far as Russia is concerned, the contest will not be of such long duration as if its warlike chief were untrammelled by fears of domestic commotion.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE EMPEROR'S PROJECTS AGAINST BRITISH INDIA CONSIDERED—ALLIANCE WITH PRUSSIA.

March through Persia to Hindustan—This conquest a favourite theme with French writers—Actually planned and contemplated by Russia—Its absurdity and impracticability—Can be easily counteracted by England—Favourable stations for us in the Persian Gulf, &c.—Allies of the emperor—Doubtful friendship with Austria—Prussian aid—Views of that state on Hamburg.

We have now hurriedly and imperfectly stated some of the reasons which induce us to believe that, in place of being able to add to his dominions, the emperor will for the next few years have sufficient employment in keeping together those which he already possesses. However ambitious he may be to distinguish himself as a warrior, he will not, for the present, attempt to disturb the peace of Europe. That he will ultimately do so, when Poland is more secure, Circassia conquered, and internal factions appeased, there can be little

doubt; and therefore it is that we urge on England the necessity of being prepared for a struggle.

Should the emperor find us too strong to give him any chance at sea, it is generally thought that he will attack us by land, on what he believes to be our most vulnerable side,—through our Indian possessions. With French writers, at least, this has long been a frequent and a favourite theme. They every now and then remind us that it is among the distant defiles of the Sutlege, or the yet more distant and equally probable jungles of Coimbatore, that the doom of proud England will be sealed; or sometimes they make the discovery that the Punjaub or the Sunderbunds will be the more fitting scene of our humiliation—of a fall, from which we shall never rise.

When enumerating the emperor's projects at a former page, we did not mention this one amongst them, because we were then giving only those which we considered most practicable. For, although no one acquainted with history will assert, in the face of so many instances of its having been actually accomplished, that this passage is altogether impossible, yet few can look upon it as an enterprise very likely to succeed in the present day, and with modern troops. Undeterred, however, by any regard to its difficulty,

Nicholas, there is every reason to believe, *has*, at times, cherished a scheme something like that now alluded to. With eagle eye he has surveyed the wide space from the Caspian to the mouths of the Hoogly, and, in dreams, seen his banner waving on the ruins of Fort William. His empire, beginning with conquered Greece, would then extend from the eastern side of the Adriatic to the "solar shores of Ganges;" from Cape Comorin to the ridge of the Himmalayas, and thence, in one flight, to the Arctic shores. This would be something like an empire for a man to breathe in. And who shall say that it is unreasonably large? It will only be a little more extensive than that ruled over by Alexander, or than the Caliphate, under Haroun-al-Raschid, when it spread from the Pyrenees to the Indus.

Absurd as the project may appear to those who have not turned their attention to such subjects, the miles have been counted, the rivers crossed, the mountains scaled; the whole scheme stands among the imperial archives at St. Petersburg, as fair and legible as engineer's quill and surveyor's compass can make it. Neither does the project date merely from yesterday. It is at least as old as the time of Peter the Great; for, in the account of his expedition against Persia, it is expressly stated, that he had long meditated the

scheme of ruling in the Caspian Sea by a powerful marine, "and thus to cause the commerce of Persia, and *of a part of India*, to pass through his states."—(Voltaire's *Peter the Great*, chap. xvi.) Yet, however long, or however fondly the project may have been cherished, it is but a dream. The emperor and his wise men have been planning an impossibility. Mountains, that are easily scaled on paper, prove but a rough path when an army comes to climb through them inch after inch. Allow this second hero of Macedon to be actually on his march, how many months would it take him to reach even the most northerly point of the British frontier? Admitting even that Russia were mistress of Persia,—as she is very likely to be at no distant day,- and that she could secure the neutrality or the co-operation of the other intervening tribes—of which there is little probability,—where would she find means of maintaining such a numerous force as would be requisite for any attempt of the kind? How organize supplies through at least 2000 miles,—the distance to be crossed before reaching the frontiers of the countries which divide the English territories from Persia? and how find her way through at least 1000 miles more, before she touch even the nearest frontier of British India? She must first give fertility to sands which never were green;

and raise a numerous population where man is fast disappearing. Having accomplished these wonders, she must next charm mountains and rivers from their stubborn positions. But, until these and many other impossibilities have been achieved, it will be vain for her to think of marching on an invasion, regarded by every one acquainted with the countries as utterly impracticable under existing circumstances.

All the reasoning that has been employed on this subject is so ably condensed in the following passage, written twenty years ago, and, consequently, at a time when the subject would be more dispassionately considered than under the present excitement regarding the enterprises of Russia, that it must carry conviction to every impartial mind. "That the passage is possible," says an able writer, "no one who recollects the many similar transits in Sir John Malcolm's history can safely venture to deny. But in what condition an European army would arrive at Delhi, after fighting its way from the fords of the Araxes; what would be the health of the troops after passing so many different climates; how many cannon would have been abandoned in the sands of Durra and Beloochistan; how many horsemen would 'tighten their reins' in despair, when the ridges of the Indian Caucasus rose be-

fore them; and with what remaining strength and spirit the invader would be enabled to cope with forces as well disciplined as his own in the best of times,—are subjects, we apprehend, to be quite as seriously considered by those who meditate such an attack, as by those who are called upon to resist it."*

But the strongest argument of all against this much-vaunted threat, lies in the fact that, before the invading army could have got through the first desert, the fate of the Russian empire would be decided in a very different quarter. Ere England could be injured in even the remotest of her wide-spread dependencies, Russia would have received a death-blow in the most vital point. Hindustan is many months' journey away from St. Petersburg; but Cronstadt is within a few days' sail of England.

If England chose to exert herself, however, even at this eleventh hour, she could still do much to counteract the emperor's influence in Persia; for, both sovereign and people lean to us more than to their Muscovite conquerors. If no other way remains for strengthening ourselves against the consequences of Russian predominance in those regions, why delay so strangely to secure the

* *Quarterly Review*, 1816, vol. xv., p. 291.

long-talked-of islands in the gulf of Persia, which, when fortified, as they could easily be, would give us a Gibraltar in the East, that may one day be as useful to us, as the one which cost us dearer in the Mediterranean? We are surely as able to pay for these places—if payment be the question—as the Americans are to pay for Pola in the Adriatic—negotiations about the purchase of which are still going on between the Austrians and them. What is lawful for them to do in Europe, cannot be unlawful for us in Asia.

Without entering into further details regarding the ambitious projects of the Emperor Nicholas, we may now try to answer the important question, Who are the allies that are to support him in accomplishing these daring schemes? For, bold and confident though he is, no one will suppose him capable of attempting so much with his own single hand.

The support of France,—the probability of his obtaining which has already been hinted at,—is by far too doubtful to entitle him to place much confidence upon it in the hour of need. She might join him in a war against England; but in any other quarrel that could arise, the interests of France and Russia would be so directly opposed to each other, that no fear need be entertained

that these powers would long march hand in hand. We are willing to admit, however, that the partiality which the emperor has of late been showing to the Bonaparte family, may have more in it than meets the eye. All who know the French, must know that the very name of Napoleon still acts on them like a spell. Is Nicholas, by courting the connexions of their great emperor, seeking to secure the good-wishes of the French nation, under a belief that they may yet avail him more than those of their king?

Some regard the government of the United States as the sure supporter of Russia. Having, say they, no naval power in Europe on whom he can reckon as a steady ally, he is forced to cross the Atlantic, for that kind of aid, which, in the event of a rupture with Britain, is precisely that which he most needs. That there has been some coquetting betwixt them, is beyond a doubt; and the distinguished regard with which the emperor treats all travellers from the United States, shows at least his anxiety to obtain a good name in America. Their government, however, is too wise to unite with him in any quarrel in which he would have England for an enemy, until he can hold out more tempting advantages than he has yet been able to offer.

Others say that Russia reckons strongly on

her alliance with Austria. But though there be a seeming friendship, there is no real good-will between those two courts. The pride of Austria has been too deeply wounded by Russia in various ways, of late, to make it probable that the present alliance can be of long duration. Austria, from the first, *foresaw* the evil consequences of the success of Russia in the recent war with Turkey; but the peaceful policy in which she so honestly perseveres, prevented her from interfering at the time. Now, however, she *feels* the full shame of her too conciliating system, in the hourly insults she was preparing for herself, when she permitted Russia to plant her forts and her custom-houses at the mouths of the Danube—when she inconsiderately committed the water-gates of her fair empire to the keeping of her most powerful enemy. Her turn for vengeance is not yet come, but come it will. Let a good occasion arise—let another European war break out—and it will soon be seen how cordial is the amity between Austria and Russia.

Nicholas, however, has another German ally, and one on whom he knows that he can reckon in every emergency. There cannot be the least doubt, that the friendship between him and the court of Berlin, is extremely close, and, for the

rest of Europe, pregnant with danger. To use a familiar expression, they *understand* each other most thoroughly. There is no scheme of the emperor's so ambitious, that Prussia will not support him in it. Nicholas cannot add a single league to his territory, but at the expense of the honour or of the interests of some of the greater powers of Europe: Prussia, on the contrary, has nothing to lose, and may even gain by the aggrandizement of Russia. On Prussia, therefore, the emperor relies with unbounded confidence; and her friendship would be of infinite value to him, were it only as a barrier against the powers of the West. In the event of a war with France, Prussia could at least keep the enemy at bay, till the Russian troops should be brought back from more distant fields.

We have heard many Prussians say, that the present close alliance between their government and that of Russia is a mere "family affair"—nothing more than a kind of gratitude to the all-powerful emperor of the Russians, for having been the first to raise a Prussian princess to a throne of the highest rank. "How," say they—the liberal party in Prussia—"how can we, a civilized, and now, by universal admission, a highly enlightened nation, have any real sympathy with such a barbarous people as the Russians, and so despotic a

ruler as their Tzar? It is to England, the land of free institutions, that we lean, and her should we wish to have for an ally, because it is for institutions like hers that we wait, and ere long, *must have.*"

But though the sympathies of the more intelligent in Prussia are in favour of England, the government is most decidedly Russian. The prudence of the present king—a prudence learnt from afflictions the longest continued, the most humiliating, and the most severe, endured by any monarch of our eventful century—keeps him from embarking in war in conjunction with Russia. So long as Frederick William is spared, Prussia will not rashly engage in a game which at one time cost her so dear: but, in the course of nature, his days cannot now be many, and when "another shall reign in his stead," the ardour of a younger king will soon forget the sage counsels of his more temperate father. The Crown-Prince, it is well known, is a most decided—we should say more—a most uncompromising admirer of Russia and her policy.

There is a way, too, by which the emperor can secure the support of every man in Prussia—liberals, soldiers, and philosophers. Much as they gained, both in territory and in power, at the Congress of Vienna, the Prussians are not yet satisfied. They must have *more.* They have as

yet no name as a naval power, and notwithstanding their long line of sea-coast, and a large population of hardy fishermen, the nursery of their future navy, they can never hope to possess any weight at sea, so long as the Baltic is but a Danish duck-pond, with a sluice which England can shut at pleasure in summer, and which in winter, not even the English themselves can open. "*Prussia must have a footing on the North Sea*"—we are repeating words which we have heard a hundred times in Berlin and in the provinces—"*in plainer terms, she must have Hamburg, and the mouth of the Elbe.*" Then will the model frigate of the good King William of England—a present more flattering to the vanity of the Prussians, than any they ever received—be no longer an empty compliment, a mere show for the holiday folks of Potsdam; then will the naval tastes of their amiable and gifted Prince Adelbert, have full scope for development; then, in one word, will Prussia have fulfilled her destiny, and attained in Europe that rank to which she is entitled.

We repeat, that the emperor has but to hold out this flattering prospect to the Prussians, to pledge himself to satisfy their ambitious claims, and there is not a man in the kingdom that will not aid him in any war he may undertake.

Let it not be imagined, however, that this statement is made from bad feeling to the Prussians. On the contrary, there is no nation on the continent whom we consider more worthy of the esteem of Englishmen; for there is none more enlightened, none more brave, none (we are not speaking of the government, but of the nation) more kindly disposed towards England, and none of whose good opinion England has more reason to be proud. In saying, as we have now done, that they are eager for the aggrandizement of Prussia, we say nothing that does them shame; and we do it in the hope that England may find means of detaching them from an alliance, not more unfavourable to her, than it will in the end prove to be to them. The sentiments of the great mass of the Prussian nation being, as already stated, so favourable to England and English principles, we ought to employ every means to cherish that partiality.

Much good has already been done in this respect, through the agency of Lord William Russell, the vigilant representative of Great Britain at the court of Berlin; and if our government give him efficient aid in carrying out his enlightened views, both the sovereign and the people of Prussia would be soon weaned from their projects of conquest; and the two greatest protestant powers of

Europe would once more cement the bonds of a friendship, which ought never to have been even temporarily interrupted, and which cannot be long dissolved, without the most fatal detriment to the highest interests of the whole human race.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EMPEROR'S PARTIALITY TO THE ENGLISH—INFLUENCE AND SERVICES OF LORD DURHAM.

Russian nobles unfavourable to a war with England—Nicholas himself fond of Englishmen—His attention to our travelling countrymen—Captain ——— in the imperial palace—The emperor's anxiety to know the state of public opinion in England—Reads our newspapers, and debates in parliament—His respect for Lord Durham—Favours obtained by him for Englishmen—Has removed many of the emperor's prejudices regarding England—Mistakes about us on the continent.

We are far from believing that the Emperor Nicholas, even with the certainty of that support from Prussia, alluded to in the preceding chapter, will be eager to provoke a war with any of the European powers. Some of the facts, connected with the internal dissensions of his empire, which may be regarded as securities for his good behaviour towards Europe in general, have been already enumerated; and we shall now state some

of those considerations which are likely to prevent him from seeking a rupture with England in particular.

Among the reasons which will restrain him from going rashly to war with England, is the sure knowledge which he possesses, that such a war would be most unpopular among his own subjects. England can do much better without Russia, than Russia can without England. His nobles have not yet forgotten the embarrassing diminution which their incomes experienced, during the adherence of Russia to the Continental System of Napoleon, after the treaty of Tilsit. They know that the moment we refuse to take the hemp and other produce of their estates, their best source of income is dried up. In Russia, as in other countries, rich and poor depend on each other: if the peasant cannot dispose of the tallow which he hoards, the nobleman cannot look for his dues.

Another reason for believing that there is no chance of an immediate war between Russia and England, lies in the emperor's character. Though he has at times cherished wild projects of ambition, yet, those who know him best maintain that, in his calmer moments, he has no serious desire to measure weapons with us. If he be increasing his fleet, and keeping his army on so strong a footing, it is only with a view to be ready

for war when war becomes inevitable. Instead of hating the English, it is said that there is no nation which he more admires, and none of which he is so anxious to acquire the good opinion. He is willing to make every sacrifice, in order to remove our prejudices against him and Russia.

As a proof of this, it must be stated, that in no country are English travellers treated with such distinction; the very name is a passport. Where travellers of other nations are treated with neglect, the Englishman meets with the warmest attention. "*We* have no merit in using you well," said the amiable Countess ——, to whom we were expressing our gratitude for the courteous attentions received from her and her husband, who holds an official situation in one of the most important divisions of Central Russia. "In showing attention to the English who come our way, my husband is only obeying the express commands of the emperor."

Nor is it through others merely that he shows his regard for our countrymen: he is personally at much pains to render their stay in Russia agreeable. In fact, his attention to English visiters who have once become known to him, is extreme. They are invited to court; honoured with much of his conversation; recognised in the streets, to the great astonishment of the natives; and have

every facility given them for visiting all that may interest them. Nor are these attentions extended merely to men of high station—to the duke or earl, whether minister or not, who may stray into the Russian territories once in ten years. In that case it might be said that it is to their rank, not their country, that the homage is paid: but he is equally attentive to those devoid of all claim from rank or official consequence. This was particularly evinced by the distinguished kindness shown to an officer of the English navy—at present, we believe, on the South-American station—who visited St. Petersburg a few summers ago, without any especial introductions beyond those of gentlemanly manners and great zeal for his profession. After being some time in Russia, the gallant captain surprised his friends in other parts of the world by the announcement that he had been spending part of his time on a visit in the imperial palace. In fact, the emperor, pleased with his manner, and eager, as he always is, to turn to account every opportunity of obtaining information, showed him unbounded kindness—took him to see his ships—made him dine with the empress; in a word, treated him as a brother officer would have treated his old comrade after long separation. The English gentlemen resident in the capital, accustomed only to the stiff and killing formality with which the imperial

family treat even the highest nobles about them, were struck with amazement when walking with their naval friend, to hear a grand-duke or a minister of state salute him, in passing, with a "How d'ye do?" or a "*Comment ça va?*" with all the familiarity of ordinary mortals. In this instance the emperor did not lose his labour: the gallant captain, who, besides being a liberal in politics, had gone to St. Petersburg with even more than the usual prejudices which Englishmen entertain against Russia and its sovereign, became so complete a convert, that no young ensign whom he had personally selected for promotion could be more enthusiastic in sounding the praises of Nicholas than he has ever since been.

In fact, a desire to obtain the good opinion of England, is a prominent part of the emperor's character. In this respect he resembles Napoleon, who, all the time that he was making war upon us, and abusing us through his journals, was most sensitively desirous to know what was thought and said of him in England. So anxious is Nicholas on this head, that when any discussion is coming on in the British parliament connected with Russia, he has no rest till he sees the speeches. Never was this anxiety more remarkably shown than when Lord Dudley Stuart, now nearly three years ago, announced his intention of bringing the affair of

Cracow before the House of Commons, and when the attention of the house, much about the same time, was to be called to the progress of Russian power in the East. The emperor's eagerness to know what had been said was boundless. On one or other of these occasions the government newspapers had not arrived at the regular time; but the moment it was discovered that Lord Durham had received the London journals, they were sent for with as much haste as if the fate of Russia had hung on the lips of Mr. Wakley or Mr. Attwood. The speeches, it will be recollected, were very acrimonious. A belief had for some time prevailed that the emperor was preparing for immediate war; and our merchants were complaining of insults and injuries received at his hands, or at his instigation, in the East. Under these circumstances, each successive speaker went beyond "the honourable gentleman who had just sat down" in abuse of Russia. War—nothing but instant and unrelenting war, it seemed, could wipe out the stains inflicted on the outraged dignity of England. The emperor read all this—and, as might be expected, was furious. The uncourtly plainness of English radicals is most unmeet for an emperor's ear. The threat of "war" he could forgive—if it must come to that, let the two nations even try their strength; the sooner the better: but the "abuse"—the

taunts of barbarism, tyranny, slavery, and all the other terms of polite indignation, strewed as thickly through the reports of the speeches, as if the printer had kept a supply of them ready set for the occasion, and thrown them in at random—these were what Nicholas could not away with. But, fortunately, Lord Durham was at hand: he knew something more of the House of Commons than his majesty could do, and put matters in their true light. The imperial wrath died away; but with it did not die the regret felt by every friend of England in St. Petersburg, that it is now so much the fashion to speak of Russia in these irritating terms. All with whom we talked on this subject say that such diatribes do a great deal of harm. Russia is not to be conquered by the rhetoric of Billingsgate. It would be more wise to be prepared to fight her than to lull ourselves in that fancied superiority which such representations are calculated to cherish. Charges of barbarism are easily made — they cost neither much time nor much penetration; but both writers and speakers would be doing much more good to England by acquainting her with facts than by pleasing her with tropes. It is only by looking boldly at our danger—by counting the ships, the soldiers, the resources of Russia—that we can ever be prepared for the struggle which *must* come.

There can be little doubt but the rupture has been retarded by the visit of Lord Durham to the court of St. Petersburg. As travellers who would fain chronicle nothing but the truth concerning all, we must do him the justice to say that he has deserved well of England by his conduct in Russia. We are by no means among the admirers of his lordship's politics, and went to Russia much more inclined to detect subject for censure in his conduct than matter for praise. Candour, however, compels us to state, that from all we could learn he discharged his public duties with much zeal and integrity; while, in private life, his courtesy to our countrymen, individually, gained him the affections of every class of Englishmen living under the Tzar, more completely than had ever been done by any former minister. All those who had most frequent opportunities of associating with him in Russia, agree in stating that years have wrought a salutary change both on the manners and the sentiments of the noble lord. From being petulant and supercilious, he has become kind and familiar; from being an exclusive in his bearing, and strictly tenacious of the privileges of his rank, he has become liberal and indulgent to all who approach him;—above all, from being violent and visionary, he has settled down into a calm and practical politician. That his diplomatic service

has had much share in producing this change, cannot be doubted: he has "seen with his own eyes" that there may be good things even in the much-libelled Russia, and by his own experience learnt that a despot can be both amiable and enlightened.

Intercourse with the emperor would seem, in fact, to be fatal to our liberal countrymen. His glance no sooner falls upon them than they become his most devoted admirers; and the same, we are afraid, must be admitted of his power over our countrymen of the opposite party,—as is well shown by the case of the noble marquis whose work on Russia has already been referred to in these pages. It is but fair to state, however, in regard to Lord Durham, that the emperor had much trouble before he could make him a good Russian. His visits to the ambassadorial villa, we have heard, were so frequent, that his lordship has sometimes been compelled to discourage them. In fact, the distinction with which he was treated by the emperor was most remarkable. Wherever he went, to the fleet or to the camp, at church and at court, Lord Durham had to be with him. It was soon seen that, greatly to the annoyance of the other foreign ministers, literally nothing could be done without the English ambassador. Some of our countrymen, indeed, feared that his lordship had become too good a

courtier, and alleged that the imperial attentions had no other aim than to flatter him into convenient security. The emperor, said they, is a clever man, a quick judge of character, and, having soon discovered his lordship's foible, was merely playing on his vanity, by those extreme marks of personal esteem. In plain terms, they hinted that Nicholas, to use a vulgar expression, was *too much* for Lord Durham, and loaded him with all these attentions merely to put him off his guard, and to enable him to carry on his own schemes undisturbed.

For our own parts, however, we found no reason to concur in these sentiments. So far as we could learn, Lord Durham did not neglect his country's interests, nor allow himself to be overreached in a single instance. The non-rejection even of exaggerated courtesies does not necessarily imply the sacrifice of any principle.

That the emperor's compliments were not all empty ones, was well shown by a case which was much talked of during our stay in the Russian capital; and which, besides doing credit to his lordship's vigilance as the protector of his countrymen, speaks strongly for his humanity as an individual. An Englishman of the name of G——, having been wronged out of a considerable sum—160,000 roubles (6400*l.*) or thereabouts—in some transac-

tion with government more than thirty years ago, raised an action in the courts of law, in the hope of obtaining some redress. Years passed away, however, without bringing any prospect of a favourable termination to his suit. At last, when the whole of the tribunals through which the case had been dragging its tedious length, had decided against him, he gave up all hope of ever recovering his money. This was some time before Lord Durham's arrival at St. Petersburg; but the disappointed suitor, hearing soon after that the new ambassador was very attentive to all questions brought before him, and especially to those affecting the rights or interests of even the humblest of his countrymen, took courage and submitted the case for his consideration. His lordship finding that there really was foul play in the matter, resolved, as the only likely way of obtaining justice, to lay the papers before the emperor himself. Nor had he calculated wrong in trusting to his majesty's high sense of justice; for, although it is contrary to his usual habits to revise a proceeding which has been heard before all the regular tribunals, yet, solely out of regard to Lord Durham, as he took care to state, he made himself carefully master of the whole transaction, and, in a few weeks, sent the overjoyed Englishman an order for the full payment of his claim.

Nor was it merely by procuring favours for individuals that our late ambassador at the court of St. Petersburg turned his influence with the emperor to account; for he also procured some most important favours for our merchants as a body; such as the abolition of burdensome restrictions, by which some branches of the trade with England were hampered.

But of all the services rendered by Lord Durham to his country, while acting as our minister in Russia, none is more important than that which he conferred, by removing the misapprehension under which the emperor laboured, in regard to many points connected with England. No one can have mixed much in society abroad, without discovering that the most gross misconceptions are entertained, even by the best informed, about the state of parties, the spirit of revolution, and the tendency of recent reforms in England. They read one of Mr. O'Connell's letters to my Lord Somebody, or one of his speeches at the Corn Exchange, and instantly take it for granted that the chief of Derrynane is to be King of Ireland within a week; or at least, that France, or Russia, or the Pope, or any body that pleases, has but to land a regiment or two in Galway Bay, and all is over with English supremacy. The Green Isle, they infer, will, without reluctance, swear allegiance to any that will have charity enough to be her new

master. Sometimes it is Mr. Hume that has made a speech about flogging, or some other military question, and next day, much to his own surprise, the unwarlike orator is marching at the head of the army, proclaiming through the land that there shall be "no more kings in England."

Next time, it is Sir Robert Peel who brings about the revolution: he has opposed some measure of the government, and forthwith our clear-sighted friends behold Victoria,

"Regina di virtù et di beltà,"

setting out to conquer new hearts and new kingdoms, in some more loyal clime.

In short, our neighbours *do not understand us.* They read these things; and their newspapers—none more actively than the salaried and *censored* government organs—are at great pains to disseminate all that appears to weaken England: they read them, and misinterpret their import; chuckling with glee at the thought that *now*, surely, our last knell has sounded. Poor, simple ones! They know as little of England, as if the Channel were an insurmountable wall of adamant, instead of an open friendly sea, which thousands of them are crossing every day to visit us, and study us, and write about us. Our "freedom of speech," our privilege of grumbling, of being dissatisfied with every man and every thing, actual

or possible,—in short, all the great, essential features of English character and English institutions, —are at this moment as great mysteries to the nations of the continent, as if printing had never been invented, nor travelling thought of. They cannot imagine how the members of our different parties can oppose each other so vigorously in public, and yet never seek to cut each other's throats; nor will they be brought to believe that, though we have many a contest among ourselves, yet, let a foreign enemy appear, and that instant all domestic quarrels are laid aside, that we may unite with one heart and one hand, to convince the world how little they know us.

Such is the ignorance regarding England that prevails on the continent; and none was more under its influence than the well-informed Emperor Nicholas. The *recent* changes in our institutions, in particular, are not yet understood, even by the few who were formerly well acquainted with England. The emperor, therefore, like many others, was fully persuaded that we were fast advancing towards revolution and anarchy; that the spirit which achieved the Reform Bill would not rest, till every vestige of what had made us great should have been swept away. Rank and property had lost their influence. Tories were never to lift their voices nor obtain power again. The

principles we had acted on for a thousand years were to be abandoned; royal palace and baronial hall were alike to be laid in ruins; rapine and strife rode triumphant; "chaos was come again;" and England, so long the admiration of the world, needy, distracted, friendless, torn by factions, floating without star to cheer, or compass to guide her,—unhappy England, lay at the mercy of the first assailant who might think so mean a wreck worthy of his seizure.

But the emperor now knows better what England is. He is at length aware that the principle of destruction is not so strong nor so dangerous amongst us as he had at one time hoped. Lord Durham has opened his eyes; and he will no longer dare all he had meditated, in the belief of our disunion and helplessness. Let it not be thought, however, that Nicholas has *abandoned* his plans; he has only altered the way in which he hoped to accomplish them. He may not now seek to employ force so soon as was intended, but he will still employ cunning. He will not fight us with his fleets, as he had begun to think he might; but, wherever he has a province to annex, or an empire to subdue, he will still try to get the better of us by negotiation—by bribery—by talent.

After all, if England is really to lose her superiority—to sink to the rank of a second-rate power,

—as she will virtually do when the emperor's intrigues shall have wrested from us every shadow of influence in Turkey, in Persia, in Greece, perhaps in the North of Europe itself,—would it not be more honourable to have it said by the future historian, that Russia achieved all this by strength of arms—that we yielded only when *compelled* to do so—than to have it recorded that we *allowed* her to triumph by our own want of spirit, and the incapacity of our agents?

Our St. Petersburg budget is now exhausted; but we cannot say farewell to that marvellous city without adding, that if all the days that may be allotted to us on earth could be as profitably filled up as were those of the short month which we spent on the banks of the Neva, then would the close of life bring few regrets for opportunities wasted, and advantages unimproved. So happily had our time fled away, that we could gladly have tarried longer among the friends whose kindness gave it wings; but, tempted by the favourable opportunity for visiting the interior of Russia, which now presented itself, we once more struck our vagrant tent, and hied us to new scenes.

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